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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-111 CONTENTS *7 June 1996*

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Arab League Official Welcomes Damascus Summit *[Cairo Radio]* 1
Inter-Arab: Damascus Summit Affirms Syrian-Saudi-Egyptian 'Axis' *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 1
Inter-Arab: Summit To Deal With Fate of Peace Process *[Kuwait TV]* 1

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 28 May 1
Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 31 May 3

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Asserts Jerusalem Capital of 'Independent' State *[Jericho VOP]* .. 5
Palestinian Affairs: Quray'—No Solution Without East Jerusalem as Capital *[AL-NAHAR 5 Jun]* 5
Palestinian Affairs: Hebron Mayor on Prospects for Redeployment, Peace Process *[Jerusalem Radio]* 5
Palestinian Affairs: Radio Reports Israeli Border Police Kill 2 Youths *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Official Says Israeli Leadership Responsible for Deaths *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Janin Area Commander Denies Shots Fired at Israeli Vehicle *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Talks With Israel on Safe Passage Underway in Tel Aviv *[Jericho VOP]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: PLO Envoy Reports Gold's Message to 'Abbas, Reply *[Jerusalem Radio]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: 'Great Consternation' Said Felt in Wake of Likud Guidelines *[Jerusalem Radio]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: Al-Faluji—Continuation of Peace Process Only Option *[Jerusalem Radio]* 8
Palestinian Affairs: Council Members Want Platform Change, Dispute Appointments *[Jerusalem Radio]* 8

ARAB AFRICA

Egypt

Egypt: Musa on Damascus Summit, Netanyahu Visit, Peace Process *[MENA]* 9
Egypt: Musa Defends 'Right' To Follow Up Turkish-Israeli Agreement *[MENA]* 9
Egypt: Musa Discusses Preparations for U.S. Visit, Economic Summit *[MENA]* 10
Egypt: Proposal To Stage Expanded Arab Summit in Cairo *[MENA]* 10
Egypt: Minister on Cooperation on Seismic Activity in Red Sea *[MENA]* 10
Egypt: U.S. Urged To 'Reformulate' Position Toward Libya *[AL-AHRAM 31 May]* 10

Libya

Libya: U.S. 'Interference' in Nigerian Affairs Criticized *[JANA]* 11

Mauritania

Mauritania: French Foreign Minister Signs Financial Agreements *[AFP]* 11

Morocco

Morocco: Labor Leaders, Government Officials Comment on Strike Talks *[MAP]* 12

Morocco: 'Wave of Social Unrest' Following General Strike *[Algiers Radio]* 13
Morocco: Opposition Parties To Hold News Conference *[MAP]* 13
Morocco: Council of Ministers Discuss Strikes, Financial Law *[Rabat TV]* 13
Morocco: L'OPINION Editor on Socio-Economic Factors Behind Riots *[Paris International]* 14

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Bahrain

Bahrain: Bahrain-Hizballah Members' Confessions Reported *[Al-Ayyam]* 15
Bahrain: States Offer Support, Condemn Iran's 'Intervention' *[SPA]* 19
Bahrain: Hamad Receives Calls of Support From Saudi, UAE Officials *[WAKH]* 19

Qatar

Qatar: Information Ministry To Be Abolished; TV, Radio To Be Independent *[JANA]* 19

Yemen

Yemen: Interior Ministry Reports Riots in al-Mukalla City *[Sanaa Radio]* 20
Yemen: Prime Minister on Agreement With Eritrea, Ties to Arabs *[MENA]* 20

IRAQ

Iraq: Assembly Official Denounces Iranian Moves in Bahrain *[INA]* 21
Iraq: Daily Calls Restoring Ties to Syria 'Vital Step' *[INA]* 21

ISRAEL

Israel: Netanyahu Calls al-Asad Message 'Positive' *[Jerusalem TV]* 22
Israel: Netanyahu on 'Partial' Accords With Syria, Retaining Golan *[THE JERUSALEM POST 7 Jun]* 22
Israel: Meridor Discusses Likud Government's Policies *[Jerusalem TV]* 22
Israel: 'Draft' Likud Government Guidelines Reported *[MA'ARIV 7 Jun]* 26
Israel: Talks With Religious Bloc in 'Trouble'; Eytan Insists on Defense *[Jerusalem Radio]* 27
Israel: Preference Poll—Baraq Leads in Defense, Shohat in Treasury *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 7 Jun]* 28
Israel: Netanyahu Adviser Stresses Commitment to Peace Process *[Jerusalem Radio]* 28
Israel: Religious Parties, Third Way Submit Demands to Likud *[Jerusalem Radio]* 29
Israel: Netanyahu Said Planning U.S.-Style Prime Minister's Office *[MA'ARIV 7 Jun]* 29
Israel: Ministers Spearheading Move To Hold Early Labor Elections *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 30

JORDAN

Jordan: King Husayn Says Amman Not To Negotiate for Palestinians *[Amman Radio]* 31
Jordan: King Husayn Interviewed on Israeli Plans, Saudis, Bahrain *[London MBC TV]* 31
Jordan: King Rejects 'Attempts' To Deny 'Country's Achievements' *[Amman TV]* 31
Jordan: Syria Reportedly Accusing Amman of Supporting Iraq *[SHIHAN 14 Jun]* 32
Jordan: Deputies React to Statements by Syria's Talas Against Amman *[SHIHAN 14 Jun]* 32
Jordan: 'Large Quantities of Weapons' Coming From Syria Seized *[SHIHAN 14 Jun]* 33
Jordan: Country 'No Longer Suitable' for Iraqi Oppositionists *[London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI 6 Jun]* 33
Jordan: Heads of Security, Intelligence Promoted *[AL-DUSTUR 7 Jun]* 33

LEBANON

Lebanon: 'Big Explosion' Said To Target Israeli Patrol; 7 Casualties *[Beirut Radio]* 34
Lebanon: Fadlallah Criticizes Bahrain Over Iran Allegations *[IRNA]* 34

SYRIA

Syria: Al-Asad Tells French Figure Peace Possible With Netanyahu *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 35

Syria: Radio Urges Joint Arab Action To Face Netanyahu 'Ambitions' *[Damascus Radio]* 35
Syria: Papers Preview Damascus Summit *[Damascus Radio]* 35

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: 4-Party Alliance Suspends Hekmatyar *[AFP]* 37
Afghanistan: Resolution Calls For 'Immediate Resignation' of Rabbani *[AFP]* 37
Afghanistan: Rabbani Aide—Shiite Leader Invited To Share Power *[AFP]* 38
Afghanistan: Rabbani Meets With Shiites, Urges National Solidarity *[IRNA]* 38
Afghanistan: Iran's Borujerdi Meets Party Leaders *[Tehran International]* 38
Afghanistan: Ahmad Shah Mas'ud Interviewed on Issues *[THE NATION 4 Jun]* 39

India

India: UF Releases Guiding Agenda—Common Minimum Program *[THE HINDU 6 Jun]* 41
India: More Leaders, Prominent Figures React to Common Program *[Delhi Radio]* 48
India: Prime Minister Comments on Completion of Kashmir Elections *[Delhi Radio]* 49
India: Official Defends Safety of Nuclear Power Plants *[THE TIMES OF INDIA 6 Jun]* 49

Iran

Iran: Tehran Sees U.S. Behind Bahrain's Allegations *[Tehran TV]* 50
Iran: Commentary Criticizes 'Baseless' Accusations by Bahrain *[Tehran Radio]* 50
Iran: Muslim Bloc Said Only Alternative to Capitulation to Israel *[TEHRAN TIMES 2 Jun]* ... 51
Iran: Commentary on Iranian Involvement in Caspian Sea Oil Deal *[IRNA]* 51
Iran: Azeri Official Favors Iran's Inclusion in Oil Consortium *[IRNA]* 52
Iran: Deputy Foreign Minister on Relations With Afghanistan *[Tehran Radio]* 52
Iran: German Institute To Provide Credits for Iranian Projects *[IRNA]* 53
Iran: Khamene'i Delivers Address at Khomeyni Memorial *[Tehran International]* 53
Iran: Rafsanjani Says U.S. Attempts To Isolate Iran Have Failed *[Tehran Radio]* 55
Iran: Commentary Views New Majles *[KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL 2 Jun]* 56
Iran: Lawmakers Shoulder Crucial Responsibilities *[IRAN NEWS 2 Jun]* 56
Iran: Fifth Majles Urged To Tackle Economic Problems *[ABRAR 2 Jun]* 57
Iran: Hezbollah Urges Exposure of Deputies Backed by Capitalists *[KEYHAN 1 Jun]* 58
Iran: Engineers Repair Baltic Company's Cargo Ship *[ETTELA'AT 2 Jun]* 59
Iran: Bank Governor Says G-6 MPs Hold 60 Percent Majles Majority *[IRAN NEWS 2 Jun]* ... 59
Iran: Readers Complain About 'Lawbreakers' Corrupting Children *[KEYHAN 1 Jun]* 59
Iran: Students March To Demand Expulsion of Liberal Lecturers *[KEYHAN 2 Jun]* 59
Iran: SAFF Describes Zolfaqar Tank *[21 Apr-20 May]* 60
Iran: President Addresses Environmental Group *[IRNA]* 61
Iran: Majles Deputies Criticize ETTELA'AT's Handling of Report *[RESALAT 30 May]* 61
Iran: Editor in Chief of PAYAM-E DANESHJU Appears in Court *[RESALAT 29 May]* 61
Iran: HAMSHAHRI Available on Internet From 21 Jun *[HAMSHAHRI 30 May]* 61
Iran: Daily—Voice and Vision Blatant in its Biased Approach *[SALAM 2 Jun]* 62

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Reiterates Support for Kashmiri Cause *[Islamabad Radio]* 62
Pakistan: Bhutto Speaks on Karachi, Offers Talks With Opposition *[Islamabad Radio]* 62
Pakistan: Spokesman Announces Bhutto To Address Habitat II *[Islamabad Radio]* 63
Pakistan: PTV Notes Positive Indian Response to Bhutto Talks Offer *[Islamabad TV]* 63
Pakistan: Spokesman Reacts to Indian Offer of Kashmir Autonomy *[Islamabad Radio]* 63
Pakistan: Islamabad Reports Kashmiris' Reaction to Indian Talks Offer *[Islamabad Radio]* ... 64

Pakistan: Asif Clarifies Statement on Talks With India *[THE MUSLIM 5 Jun]* 64
Pakistan: Yasir 'Arafat Discusses Kashmir at Embassy in London *[Islamabad TV]* 65
Pakistan: Asif Ali Expresses 'Complete Neutrality' Toward Afghanistan *[Islamabad Radio]* .. 65
Pakistan: Prime Minister Views Economy, Rules Out Defense Cuts *[Islamabad Radio]* 65

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Minister Urges Continuation of State of Emergency *[DAILY NEWS 7 Jun]* 66
Sri Lanka: Official Sees 'Serious Rifts' Among LTTE Leaders *[DAILY NEWS 7 Jun]* 67
Sri Lanka: Jaffna Residents Express 'Thankfulness' for Liberation *[DAILY NEWS 6 Jun]* 67
Sri Lanka: LTTE Battle Report Claims 'Increasing' Enlistments *[Tamil Eelam News WWW]* . 68

Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Arab League Official Welcomes Damascus Summit

NC0606151796 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League has welcomed the tripartite summit to be held in Damascus tomorrow among Presidents Husni Mubarak and Hafiz al-Asad and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah.

Ambassador Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, Arab League assistant secretary general for political affairs, has stated that the Arab League, which calls for restoring Arab solidarity, welcomes the meeting of Arabs from effective and influential states to discuss the steps that need to be taken to save the peace process and restore Arab coordination.

Ambassador al-'Allaf warned against the Israeli Government's continuing threats to freeze the peace process, in which case common Arab measures and procedures must be adopted to face up to the Israeli intransigence.

Inter-Arab: Damascus Summit Affirms Syrian-Saudi-Egyptian 'Axis'

JN0606164996 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1500 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] The tripartite summit which will be held in Damascus tomorrow is considered as an affirmation of the Syrian-Saudi-Egyptian axis whose features began to surface since the Alexandria summit that was attended by Presidents al-Asad and Mubarak and King Fahd in the wake of the Israeli-Jordanian agreement.

Arab diplomatic sources point out that choosing Damascus as the venue for the tripartite summit represents support for the Syrian position vis-a-vis the new Israeli intransigence regarding the peace process. Netanyahu will reveal this intransigence when he becomes Israeli prime minister.

According to Syrian sources, the most prominent topic on the agenda of the tripartite summit is restoring Arab solidarity by holding an expanded Arab summit at a later date. This summit is expected to discuss ways through which the Arabs can confront the Israeli intransigence by urging some Arab parties to stop building bridges with Israel. As far as the Syrian and Lebanese sides are concerned, these bridges serve the Jewish state and obstruct the requirements of peace which are based on Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Inter-Arab: Summit To Deal With Fate of Peace Process

LD0606195896 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, the Syrian capital, will host a Saudi-Egyptian-Syrian summit meeting tomorrow. His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the Saudi crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, will attend the meeting along with President Husni Mubarak and President Hafiz al-Asad.

A Syrian official source said that the three leaders will discuss the creation of a united Arab front to deal with the fate of the Middle East peace process in the light of new developments brought about after the election of Likud Party leader Benyamin Netanyahu as prime minister of Israel. [passage omitted]

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 28 May

NC0606112696

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 28 May edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Writer Sides With Minister in Dispute With al-Azhar Ulema.
2. Qina Governor Interviewed on Terrorism in Upper Egypt.
3. Column Says Israeli Election Results Irrelevant.
4. Writer Criticizes Explicit Sex Scenes in Egyptian Film.
5. Muslim Scholars Denounce Killing of French Monks in Algeria.
6. Report Criticizes Operation of Amusement Arcades in Cairo

WRITER SIDES WITH MINISTER IN DISPUTE WITH AL-AZHAR ULEMA

In a 300-word column on page 1, 'AQIDATI Board Chairman Samir Rajab sides with Awqaf Minister Dr. Hamdi Zaqzuq in his dispute with the al-Azhar Ulema Front over who controls the nation's mosques and the selection of preachers. He praises Zaqzuq for "insisting on affirming the role, mission, and jurisdiction" of the Ministry of Awqaf. He also praises Zaqzuq for his "steadfastness" against those "who call themselves the al-Azhar Ulema Front" and who "falsely claim" that the minister will prevent al-Azhar preachers from giving sermons. Rajab concludes that Islam calls for cohesion, concord, and brotherhood and rejects the formation of "fronts," the aim of which is to sow discord among Muslims.

QINA GOVERNOR INTERVIEWED ON TERRORISM IN UPPER EGYPT

On page 3, the newspaper carries a 1,000-word interview with Governor of Qina Maj. Gen. Safwat Shakir by Mamduh al-'Ashri. Shakir says that Egypt is the land of security and stability. Islam does not approve of terrorism, which is a worldwide phenomenon not confined to Egypt. He adds that Egypt is a democratic country in which the law is above everyone. Confronting terrorism is the responsibility of all society and not only the security services. The governorate has confronted terrorism by several measures, such as annexing over 500 civilian mosques to the Ministry of Awqaf and creating new work opportunities. He adds that the government has embarked on several development projects in Upper Egypt, especially in shanty towns which need water, roads, and electricity. In addition, the security services are actively watching cases of "deviation and terrorism."

COLUMN SAYS ISRAELI ELECTION RESULTS IRRELEVANT

A 400-word column on page 3, written before the Israeli elections were held on 29 May, says it is wrong to imagine that the Israeli elections will cause a dramatic change in the course of Israeli-Arab relations. These elections will not be different from previous ones. All candidates "electioneer and lie" in order to win more votes that will enable them to reach and hold power. Stressing that there are no hawks and doves in Israel, the column says they are all imperialists and colonialists who will not hesitate to "stab" the Arabs "in the back" and "spill their blood."

WRITER CRITICIZES EXPLICIT SEX SCENES IN EGYPTIAN FILM

In a 500-word column on page 6, Basyuni al-Halawani says the censorship board has cut three "explicit" sex scenes from the film "Abu-al-Dhahab" after receiving complaints from citizens in Cairo and other Egyptian towns. The writer says what the censorship board has done does not vindicate it. On the contrary, it is damning evidence that it is not doing its job of protecting morals and ethics in Egypt and is powerless before the desire of big stars who secure a license from the minister of culture, regardless of the corrupt and immoral nature of their work. The writer says the culture sector in Egypt is important and is linked to Egypt's reputation and civilization. Egypt cannot have a cultural and intellectual identity detached from Islam and genuine Arab values. When Egyptian artistic works become a carbon copy of the immorality, family breakdown, and explicit sex that are rampant in Western societies, they will lose their identity and become corrupt and immoral. Concluding, the writer urges the Ministry of Culture to reconsider its programs, search for its identity, and rearrange its priorities out of concern for Egypt's reputation and cultural identity.

MUSLIM SCHOLARS DENOUNCE KILLING OF FRENCH MONKS IN ALGERIA

A 500-word report on page 9 carries the "angry" reaction by several Muslim scholars to the killing of seven French monks in Algeria. Al-Azhar Under Secretary Shaykh Sayyid Sa'ud says Islam does not condone the killing of innocent people. He describes the killing of the French monks as a "cowardly" act that contravenes all human values and principles. He calls on the Algerian authorities to hunt down and punish the criminals. He says such acts distort the "tolerant" image of Islam. They also give the enemies of Islam the chance to strike at Islam and Muslims. Dr. 'Abd-al-Sabur Marzuq, deputy chairman of the Higher Islamic Council, denounces these "foolish" acts, saying abductions and killings do not conform with the manners and rules of Islam. Shaykh Mansur al-Rifa'i, under secretary of the Ministry of Awqaf, says Islam does not approve of this "cowardly" act. He adds that the culprits have committed a crime against the whole of mankind.

A 300-word column by Majdi Salim on page 10 also condemns the killing of the seven French monks in Algeria, describing it as an "ugly" crime unrelated to Islam. The writer says that the criminals undoubtedly know the consequences of their crime, especially in Europe, where Islam is facing onslaughts and false accusations associating it with terrorism, extremism, and violence.

REPORT CRITICIZES OPERATION OF AMUSEMENT ARCADES IN CAIRO

A 2,000-word report on pages 12 and 13 says amusement arcades have mushroomed in a "frightening" way in Cairo, despite an official ban on them. The report claims that illegal activities take place in these arcades, where teenagers drink alcohol, smoke pot, and gamble. The arcades are also a meeting place for lovers. The report lists three telephone numbers which the citizens can contact so that the authorities may close down these places.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 31 May

NC0706105196

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 31 May edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

Contents:

1. Court Ruling Against Chief Editor Denounced
2. Ulema Protest Awqaf Ministry Bill on Preaching, Mosques
3. Court Ruling on Veil Seen as Victory for Islamic Trend
4. Stronger Opposition To 'U.S.-Zionist Alliance' Urged
5. Youths Warned Against Travel to, Work in Israel
6. Islamist Banned From Travel to Turkey To Attend Conference
7. Labor Party Condemns Killing of French Monks in Algeria
8. Nigeria's Mufti Interviewed

COURT RULING AGAINST CHIEF EDITOR DENOUNCED

AL-SHA'B's main front-page article is a 1,000-word commentary on a court ruling sentencing AL-SHA'B Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn to one year in prison, suspended for three years, in connection with a libel case involving 'Ala' Hasan al-Alfi, the son of the interior minister. The commentary maintains that the sentence is "the first application of the unjust Press Law No. 93, which was rejected by the entire nation." Noting that the courts are currently examining 94 lawsuits against AL-SHA'B, the commentary says that the newspaper's chief editor is now threatened with imprisonment at any time. The only way for Husayn to avoid imprisonment for the next three years, the commentator says sarcastically, is to quit his job as a chief editor and stop writing altogether. The commentary notes that since party and press pluralism was established in Egypt in 1976, not a single journalist has been imprisoned on libel or slander charges.

—In a 500-word unattributed report on pages 1 and 8, Labor Party Deputy Leader Hilmi Murad is cited as saying that he will contest the court ruling against AL-SHA'B's chief editor. He notes that the court based its ruling on a Penal Code article whose constitutionality is still being examined by the Constitutional Court.

—In a related 1,500-word report by 'Amr Salman and Dawud Hasan on page 3, a number of journalists, writers, and jurists are cited as denouncing the sentence against Majdi Ahmad Husayn and expressing solidarity with AL-SHA'B. They note that the sentence was the first ruling issued under Press Law No. 93 of 1995. They urge all journalists to continue their efforts to foil the law and defend freedom of expression and the right of the press to expose corruption in the country.

—As part of its campaign to disclose the wealth of the al-Alfi family, the newspaper publishes on page 3 a 1,500-word report, supported by photocopies of some checks and other documents, on the establishment of a new 20 million-pound company in which 'Ala' Hasan al-Alfi and his two minor children hold a majority of shares. The report suggests that 'Adil al-Alfi took advantage of his father's post as interior minister to serve his personal interests and enrich himself.

ULEMA PROTEST AWQAF MINISTRY BILL ON PREACHING, MOSQUES

In an 1,800-word report on page 4, Jamal Imbabi cites criticism by some ulema and religious preachers of a draft law by the awqaf minister banning preaching or the building of mosques without permission from the Awqaf Ministry. After noting that the Ministry has failed to solve the problem of a shortage of mosque preachers and imams, the reporter cites the al-Azhar Ulema Front as condemning the draft law. Dr. Yahya Isma'il, the Front's secretary, is cited as saying that "it is unacceptable for mosques in Egypt, the land of peace, to be treated like cafes and night clubs." The Ministry may require licenses for anything except for building a mosque, he says. The reporter notes that the awqaf minister "launched a fierce attack against the Front for opposing the new draft law, and said that the Front does not represent the al-Azhar 'ulema." Al-Azhar 'Ulema Front President Dr. Muhammad 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Birri is cited as saying that the draft law "deprives Muslims and mosques of qualified and sincere preachers who work only to serve God's cause." He says the awqaf minister's draft law has created panic among the broad base of ulema. He and other ulema cited in the report maintain that Islam has always encouraged Muslims to compete in building mosques. Islamic preacher Dr. 'Abd-al-Rashid Saqr is cited as saying that "such laws are meant to hinder and deal a fatal blow to the propagation of the Islamic message." On the need for a license to build a mosque, Saqr says: "This is a crime we never heard of before."

COURT RULING ON VEIL SEEN AS VICTORY FOR ISLAMIC TREND

An unattributed 2,000-word report on page 6 views an 18 May Constitutional Court ruling concerning the wearing of the veil by women as "a new victory for the Islamic trend, indeed, for the noble Islamic values, which the secularists and the Westernized people have tried to harm for days and months." The report cites excerpts of the court ruling and concludes: "Although the ruling said that the veil is not an established Islamic duty on which jurisconsults hold a unanimous position, it stressed beyond doubt that the veil is an Islamic necessity mentioned in the Koran, the prophet's tradition, and jurisconsults' explanations." The report notes the court's description of the veil as a garment that covers all the body except for the face and the hands. The report says the "historic" court ruling is "a strong slap in the face of all those who cast doubt on the veil as an Islamic duty. These people should now stop their false claims."

STRONGER OPPOSITION TO 'U.S.-ZIONIST ALLIANCE' URGED

In a 5,000-word article on page 5, Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn urges strengthening of the domestic front to confront the "American-Zionist alliance." He sees some recent "positive" official statements and developments, like the visits to Egypt by the French and Chinese presidents and Mubarak's turning down of an invitation for a meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton. But he also sees some "signs of weakness and hesitation" in the Egyptian positions. Among these, Husayn cites a joint Egyptian-Israeli venture to build an oil refinery and negotiations to build a gas pipeline between Egypt and Israel. Husayn also criticizes Egypt's signing of an agreement to free Africa from nuclear weapons, even though it knows that Israel possesses a nuclear arsenal. He contends that Egypt's attempts "to tame Sudan" serve Israel and the United States.

Husayn urges the government to urgently build political power. To achieve this, he says the government should rectify the situation that emerged since the latest, "rigged" parliamentary elections. "How can the government confront the spite of the U.S.-Zionist alliance and remain steadfast if it has no legitimacy and if the people detest it?" he asks. He urges the government to consult with the opposition parties and to listen to opposing views. He notes that the government decided to sell the public sector without consulting the national forces in the country, and he argues that government statements and explanations regarding the privatization program do not provide satisfactory answers to dispel the public's fear. He points to corruption in the administrative system and expresses fear that the public sector will be looted.

Elaborating on the issue of corruption, 'Adil Husayn mentions the case of 'Adil al-Alfi, the son of the interior minister. He says the minister, who is now in an embarrassing position, has failed to defend himself. Husayn says that with the absence of law and democracy, the police establishment now enjoys absolute power and this inevitably leads to corruption. He asks: "How can we strengthen the domestic front to confront the American-Zionist alliance if we do not adopt legal and democratic methods in the government system and do not reduce the police establishment to its normal size? How can the government avoid the people's anger if it fails to respond to any extent to their demand to fight corruption, and if it fails to ask Minister al-Alfi to resign?"

Husayn also urges the government to stop its campaign against the Islamist forces and to release jailed Muslim Brotherhood leaders. He says that the U.S.-Zionist alliance "is fighting against all the political movements that work for Islamic awakening and rule." He concludes: Our call for a national front does not mean we supporting the existing situation or current government policies. The front we are seeking needs real reforms, especially in the area of democracy, and wider participation in the decision-making process.

YOUTHS WARNED AGAINST TRAVEL TO, WORK IN ISRAEL

Page 2 features three reports warning against normalization with Israel and noting Israeli efforts to recruit Egyptian spies. The reporters point out that some travel agents and tour operators are promoting tourism and labor in Israel. They contend that Israeli books, magazines, and brochures, "full of lies and dirty intentions," seek to attract young Egyptians to espionage, drugs, and prostitution. The reporters say that the "microbe" of normalization has infiltrated the minds of some misled Egyptians, who travel to Israel for work or tourism but end up being spies and traitors. They cite stories of some Egyptians who have gone or are seeking visas to travel to Israel, and they warn youths against falling in the trap of Israeli propaganda.

ISLAMISTS BANNED FROM TRAVEL TO TURKEY TO ATTEND CONFERENCE

AL-SHA'B publishes the following unattributed report on page 1: "Cairo airport security services have forbidden Sayf-al-Islam Hasan al-Banna, secretary general of the Lawyers Association, from traveling to Turkey on Tuesday [28 May] to attend a celebration organized by the Turkish Refah Party to mark the anniversary of the conquest of Constantinople and a conference on Arab-Islamic solidarity and Islamic minorities in the world.

"Al-Banna sent a letter of apology to Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the Refah Party — who had invited al-Banna — for not being able to attend."

LABOR PARTY CONDEMNS KILLING OF FRENCH MONKS IN ALGERIA

A 150-word report by Jamal Imbabi on page 1 cites a Labor Party statement condemning the murder of seven French monks in Algeria as a flagrant violation of Islamic values. The statement says the killings give enemies a chance to accuse Islam of violence and terrorism. A Labor Party delegation reportedly conveyed condolences to the embassies of France and the Holy See in Cairo.

NIGERIA'S MUFTI INTERVIEWED

Page 7 contains a 1,500-word interview with Nigeria's Mufti Dr. Ibrahim Salih al-Husayni conducted in Cairo by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah. Al-Husayni says the Nigerian Constitution restricts Islamic action, and many Muslim rights have been lost because of the Constitution. He says Muslims in Nigeria, who constitute the majority of the population, are proud of their Islamic identity and are not susceptible to missionary work. Al-Husayni appears to defend the military rulers in his country, saying they have begun steps toward democracy and a return to civilian rule. He says foreign media have given an erroneous picture of developments in the country and tried to foment sedition. He refutes Western media claims that Ken Saraweewa and the other eight Nigerians who were recently executed in Nigeria were human rights activists. He says they embezzled public funds and killed opponents. On Jerusalem, he says the city must remain Islamic and part of Palestine. He sees in Western sanctions against Libya, Sudan, and Iraq a Western scheme to bring the Islamic nation to its knees.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Asserts Jerusalem Capital of 'Independent' State

JN0606192996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat asserted that King Husayn of Jordan and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak expressed their keenness on the Palestinian track of negotiations. He said that the two leaders considered the Palestinian track the major track in the Middle East process — without ignoring the Syrian and Lebanese tracks — which seeks to arrive at a just, comprehensive, and permanent settlement in the region.

During the evening session of the Legislative Council, his excellency said that Cairo and al-'Aqabah summits are the basis for an expanded Arab summit. He noted that there are constant efforts to expand the framework of meetings to include other Arab countries, foremost of which are the cordon countries.

Reacting to comments by the Israeli Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu on his remarks in al-'Aqabah on Jerusalem, his excellency the president said: Our position on Jerusalem is clear. It is the capital of our independent Palestinian state.

His excellency said that during al-'Aqabah summit, the three leaders agreed to continue work with Arab leaders to enhance Arab solidarity and unity. The president said: We, as an Arab nation, cannot face the new world while we are divided. If this continues to be the case, the new world order will be at the expense of the Arab nation and future generations.

Palestinian Affairs: Quray'—No Solution Without East Jerusalem as Capital

TA0606131996 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 5 Jun 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, WAFA — Ahmad Quray', speaker of the Legislative Council, has stressed that "East Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian state, and any solution that does not acknowledge this will not be acceptable to the Palestinians."

In a statement to WAFA yesterday, he added that "Jerusalem is one of the topics of the final status talks, and our stance on it is clear and unambiguous. The Israeli side is completely aware of this stance."

Quray' said that "if the Israeli Government wants the peace process to continue and realize its goals, it should halt any measures that endanger the process such as settlement activity and the expansion of settlements, continued violations in Jerusalem, or the nonimplementation of the articles of the economic agreement."

Commenting on the concept of "an alternative Jerusalem," he said: There is no alternative to Jerusalem. Its boundaries have been known since 1967. We cannot give up even one inch of its land. Not only this, but Palestinian properties in West Jerusalem are subject to negotiations. Any talk of an alternative Jerusalem is nonsense. There is no alternative to Jerusalem but Jerusalem.

Quray' said that "if a proposal about an alternative Jerusalem is submitted, the Israelis will not find one Palestinian sitting with them, and if they want to decide unilaterally, that is their business."

Palestinian Affairs: Hebron Mayor on Prospects for Redeployment, Peace Process

TA0606161996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hebron Mayor Mustafa al-Natshah says that the future of the Jewish community in

Hebron will be decided in the final status talks. Speaking to reporter Mark Weiss, the mayor said that he believes the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in the city will go ahead despite the Netanyahu victory.

[Begin recording] [al-Natshah] Mr. Netanyahu, when he will be the prime minister officially in his job, I think he will commit himself to the agreement held by the Palestinian National Authority and the Israeli Government. This agreement has international witnesses — President Clinton and President Yeltsin. I think he will respect the previous signature of the prime minister.

[Weiss] How do you expect the residents of Hebron to respond, if the Israeli redeployment does not take place?

[Al-Natshah] Look, indeed, I don't think there will be any change in the situation where the settlers are living, because the redeployment will occur in 85 percent of the city, but in the center where the settlers are the situation will remain as it is now, and the Israeli Army will remain. My point of view is that the Palestinian Police in the neighboring area where the redeployment occurs, will take care of the security in the area to prove that it is capable to have command of the area which is under its control.

[Weiss] Following the victory of Binyamin Netanyahu, are you more pessimistic of the long-term prospects of a peace agreement being reached between the two sides?

[Al-Natshah] Till now it is not so clear the way he will behave to proceed forward in the peace process. We hope that he will not behave in the same manner which Mr. Shamir has behaved in Madrid and Washington. He delayed every movement in the negotiations. I hope Mr. Netanyahu will proceed forward, and he knows well that the peace is for the interest of the Israelis as well as for the Palestinians.

[Weiss] And it will still be the Palestinian position in the final status talks to demand the evacuation of all the Jewish settlers from Hebron?

[Al-Natshah] This is to be discussed later when discussing the permanent status and the negotiations for the final situation. It depends on the Palestinian National Authority and the Israeli Government. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Radio Reports Israeli Border Police Kill 2 Youths

JN0606150396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The two youths Dawud Ya'qub Shuwayki from occupied Jerusalem and 'Atiyah Isma'il Abu-Samrah from the Khan Yunus Governorate were martyred in two separate incidents last night and at dawn today.

Dawud Shuwayki was martyred and his brother Muhammad sustained moderate wounds in Hayy Ra's al-'Amud in Jerusalem when a group of the so-called Israeli border policemen opened fired on three Palestinian youths who were on their way to work.

A spokesman for the Israeli occupation police claimed that one of these youths was carrying a pistol and tried to draw it. However, when the martyr's body was transferred to the forensic institute it was revealed that he was not carrying any weapon. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Official Says Israeli Leadership Responsible for Deaths

JN0706081096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, President Yasir 'Arafat's adviser, denounced the recklessness of the Israeli occupation troops and their disregard for the lives of Palestinian citizens by opening fire at them without justification and using fabricated pretexts and lies.

He said the killing of Dawud al-Shuwayki in occupied Jerusalem and 'Atiyah Abu-Samrah in Khan Yunus by occupation troops will create a serious situation and kindle hostility. Abu-Rudaynah held the Israeli leadership responsible for the two incidents and urged it to take responsibility for the actions of its forces and troops.

Palestinian Affairs: Janin Area Commander Denies Shots Fired at Israeli Vehicle

JN0606202496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Colonel Fayiz 'Arafat, commander of Janin area, denied that any shooting at an Israel vehicle took place on the bypass road east of Janin this afternoon. He said that investigations carried by the Palestinian security agencies, the Palestinian liaison office, and the Janin Area Command showed that no shooting took place. He noted that the Israelis earlier lodged a complaint with the Palestinians over a shooting incident against the Israeli side.

Palestinian sources expressed concern at this fabricated incident. They noted that the Israeli authorities started fabricating incidents on the bypass roads in preparation for closing them, preventing citizens from using them, and turning them into a new green line. The sources said that this will lead to depriving the citizens from using their land.

Palestinian Affairs: Talks With Israel on Safe Passage Underway in Tel Aviv

JN0606201096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Palestinian-Israeli meeting is currently underway in Tel Aviv to discuss the final details of the safe passage that will link the Gaza governorates to the northern and central governorates.

Major General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya, head of the Palestinian side to the talks, said that two controversial issues continued to stand in the way of signing a final protocol on the safe passage; namely, Israel's demand that any person using the passage be detained and the location of the end of the safe passage in the Ramallah Governorate [sentence as heard].

Palestinian Affairs: PLO Envoy Reports Gold's Message to 'Abbas, Reply

TA0706073196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Umar al-Khatib, the PLO Ambassador to Jordan, has revealed the content of a message conveyed to 'Arafat's deputy Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] by Dr. Dore Gold, Bibi Netanyahu's political adviser directly after the announcement of the Israeli election results. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports:

[Ben-Menahem] PLO Ambassador to Jordan 'Umar al-Khatib likes to surprise people. Sometimes he chooses to disclose innermost PLO secrets in media interviews. This time he revealed the content of a message conveyed last week by Dore Gold, Bibi Netanyahu's adviser, to Abu-Mazin. In an exclusive interview with the Intermedia news agency for the East Jerusalem newspaper AL-QUDS, al-Khatib said the message contained three main points: 1. There is a difference between the Likud stands as an opposition and the stands it will embrace as a political leadership and a government, but the gap between the Likud stands during the election campaign and the government's political program cannot be dismissed [sentence as heard]. 2. The Likud appeals to the Palestinians to stop making pessimistic declarations implying that the Likud's peace intentions are not serious. At the same time, the Likud will stop making statements against several aspects of the agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA]. 3. The new Israeli Government is deeply committed to all tracks of the peace process.

According to al-Khatib, Abu-Mazin told Dore Gold that the PA views itself as linked in an agreement with the Israeli Government, rather than the Labor Party, a fact that has been witnessed by the international community. Abu-Mazin further said that for the PA, the Hebron redeployment is a test of the new Israeli Government. Abu-Mazin stressed the need to resume the permanent status talks between Israel and the PA.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Great Consternation' Said Felt in Wake of Likud Guidelines

TA0706104596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0905 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yasir 'Arafat is convening the PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian Authority [PA] today for a discussion of the future of the peace process. The Palestinians fear a possible rapprochement between the Likud government and Jordan. Yoni Ben-Menahem reports:

[Ben-Menahem] The debate, chaired by 'Arafat, will deal with the outcome of the tripartite al-'Aqabah summit and the future of the peace process in the wake of the Likud's rise to power. The publication of the Netanyahu government's guidelines this morning caused great consternation among the Palestinians. Since the guidelines are only a draft, they made no official reaction, but they are saying off the record that the draft means that the peace process will slow down considerably and that preconditions will be made, leading the talks to a standstill.

The Palestinians are very worried about the reports on the role Jordan is to play in the West Bank, according to Prime Minister-elect Netanyahu. Any growth of Jordanian influence in the West Bank will be at the Palestinians' expense, they say.

Khalil al-Shaqaqi, head of the Nabulus-based Palestinian Research Institute, says the Likud wants to divide the powers in the West Bank between Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians. Dore Gold's remarks about the Jordanian interests in the West Bank and Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert's declarations about Jordan's role in Jerusalem and in the holy sites have generated great apprehension among the Palestinians. That was the background for Yasir 'Arafat's statement that Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine, made at the autonomy council's meeting in Gaza yesterday .

Palestinians are saying in internal discussions that the situation as it exists now is unalterable. The Palestinians have about 30,000 armed security personnel who will not tolerate any attempt to force the Palestinians to accept arrangements they do not like.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Faluji—Continuation of Peace Process Only Option

TA0606172796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1430 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Telephone interview with 'Imad al-Faluji, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and former Hamas leader, by correspondent Hasan Abu-Zayid from the "With the Events" program; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-Zayid] Shaykh 'Imad al-Faluji, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council [PLC], said that prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu has no option but to continue the peace process launched by the Palestinians and the Israelis.

[Al-Faluji] I believe that Netanyahu will be coming to power facing a Palestinian reality on the ground. He has to complete the process that began about two years ago. Netanyahu has no option but to proceed with the political process, because I believe that any retreat from the current process will not serve any party, rather it will return the region to some kind of uncertainty and instability.

[Abu-Zayid] Are you optimistic about the achievement of progress in the peace process even with a government headed by Netanyahu?

[Al-Faluji] I am optimistic because I know that the dialogue taking place between us is a dialogue that serves the interests of two sides who in the past suffered a great deal from crises, tension, and violence. Therefore, I believe that common interests require both sides to finish this process so that they will be able to overcome that stage, which as I said was characterized by violence and instability.

[Abu-Zayid] Shaykh 'Imad, what about the dialogue between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]?

[Al-Faluji] I believe that the Israeli elections cast their shadow on the Palestinian public. At present, there is a consensus in the Palestinian street on the need for national unity and joint coordination in order to confront the political changes that have taken place in Israeli society. This will greatly contribute to easing the tension among everyone. I believe that now there is a positive climate and an expectation that a comprehensive Palestinian dialogue will be launched, not only between Hamas and the PA but among all factions and forces operating in the Palestinian arena.

[Abu-Zayid] Shaykh 'Imad, yesterday or rather two days ago you were in Jordan, did you meet there with Hamas leaders in an attempt to continue the mediation between the PA and Hamas?

[Al-Faluji] No, I did not meet with anyone in Jordan. The purpose of the visit was participation in the tripartite summit in al-'Aqabah.

[Abu-Zayid] Shaykh 'Imad al-Faluji, member of the PLC, thank you very much.

Palestinian Affairs: Council Members Want Platform Change, Dispute Appointments

TA0706104496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Elected Palestinian Council members demand that 'Arafat amend the new authority's political platform, as it does not explicitly refer to the Palestinian refugees' right of return.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that council members also disagree with 'Arafat on the composition of the new Palestinian Authority [PA] and its distribution of portfolios. Some of them threatened to withhold their support when asked to vote for the PA in the council.

Yasir 'Arafat said in reaction that he is willing to hear constructive criticism, but he does not wish to listen to unfounded accusations.

Egypt

Egypt: Musa on Damascus Summit, Netanyahu Visit, Peace Process

NC0606172996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1520 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jun (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that the tripartite summit to be held in Damascus tomorrow will deal with three main issues, namely, closing the Arab rank, keeping the peace process in motion and safeguarding it, and discussing the region's future, in addition to the strong prospects for holding an expanded Arab summit.

Asked about the duration of the summit, Musa said in a statement today that the leaders will decide on this in light of their discussion.

The tripartite summit among Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, President Mubarak, and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz will begin in Damascus tomorrow morning.

Regarding the change of venue from Riyadh to Damascus, Musa said that both Saudi Arabia and Syria had been possible venues for the summit, which is an extension of the Alexandria summit held in December 1995. He pointed out that it was agreed today to hold it in Damascus at the invitation of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. He added that contacts were held today among Presidents Mubarak and al-Asad, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' during which it was agreed to hold the summit in Damascus.

Musa stressed that the tripartite summit among Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia had been agreed upon, but only one thing remained unsettled, namely, where to hold the summit. It was decided to hold it in Damascus.

Musa noted that the Arab arena is now the scene of meetings to assess the situation in the region. In this regard, he explained that the situation in the region means the peace process, its developments, and expectations. He added: When we say the peace process we do not mean it as a cliche or just to repeat words; we mean the current peace process based on the specific principles of land for peace, he added. Musa pointed out that the peace process specifically seeks the establishment of a just, comprehensive, and balanced peace that takes into account the rights of the Palestinian people, their genuine and fundamental right to self-determination, Syria's right to an Israeli withdrawal from all its territories occupied in June 1967, and Lebanon's right to peace, territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence.

Musa added that the peace process is an extremely important and serious issue and its continuation has particular requirements. He stressed that Egypt clings to the continuation and success of this process. He pointed out that recent developments in Israel and the region require a calm assessment of the situation by the Arab leaders and a readiness to safeguard peace and make progress on the various tracks. Further, there is another issue pertaining to the Arab world. In this regard the Arabs are required to achieve the minimum coordination, understanding, and agreement on the broad lines of their activity in the face of the various developments, be they positive or negative, he added. What is also required and important is for the Arabs to close their ranks, restore their solidarity, and reach a common or concerted understanding on the nature of the current stage and the requirements of those ahead. Closing the Arabs rank, safeguarding the peace process, and making an assessment about the region's future require the Arab leaders to get together in these particular circumstances. This is what will happen; it is happening, Musa adde?????f there are any arrangements for a visit to Egypt or any other Arab state by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, the foreign minister said: What applies here is what President Mubarak has repeatedly said, namely, that Egypt will wait until the new government in Israel is formed and its position is defined. This, he added, will take place soon, that is, within a week or two. This is what we mean by a particular period. Thus, any comment in this regard must wait a while.

Regarding the possibility of holding an expanded Arab summit, Foreign Minister Musa stressed that there is an overwhelming Arab desire to hold as extensive a summit as possible and to hold summits as often as possible to be attended by whoever is interested. The meeting involving Presidents Mubarak and al-Asad and the custodian of the two holy mosques as well as the tripartite meeting among President Mubarak, King Husayn, and President 'Arafat fall within this framework. These minisummits, he added, are practical and prove that more than one minisummit can be held in one week.

Regarding Sudan, the foreign minister said that Egypt has implemented the Security Council resolution the way it deems appropriate.

Egypt: Musa Defends 'Right' To Follow Up Turkish-Israeli Agreement

NC0606173096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1615 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jun (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has noted Egypt's desire to maintain Egyptian-Turkish and Arab-Turkish relations, adding that Turkey is a fraternal and important country in the region.

Asked about Turkey's denunciation of the Egyptian press campaign against the recent Turkish-Israeli military agreement, Musa said today that Egypt is following up this issue and that this follow-up is Egypt's right. He added: What we are following up concerns the Middle East, the region's stability and future. This is a very important issue for Egypt.

He went on to say: This does not prevent us from caring about Arab-Turkish relations. We take Turkish President Suleyman Demirel's assurances very seriously. Yet this does not prevent us from following up and monitoring the issue as a whole, because this is our right as well as the right of every country.

Egypt: Musa Discusses Preparations for U.S. Visit, Economic Summit

NC0606194596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jun (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa tonight met members of the Egyptian-U.S. Presidential Council.

Muhammad Farid, chairman of the Egyptian Industries Union, said that discussions dealt with preparations for the economic summit scheduled to be held in Cairo in December. He stressed that this summit will be held on time regardless of the Israeli election outcome and the Israeli policies that will be followed ahead of the summit. He added that the summit will not be a step toward normalization with Israel, but an economic step for the region. Saying that cooperation is possible among the countries of the region, he noted that Israel is not the sole element of cooperation and that economic cooperation between Egypt and the Arab countries could be boosted.

Muhammad Farid went on to say that the economic summit aims to attract foreign investment to Egypt and that there is nothing to bar discussion of cooperation in the region on the conditions that we, as Egyptians, lay down.

He added that Egyptian businessmen will accompany Foreign Minister Musa during his visit to the United States on 12 June, when U.S. businessmen will be invited to attend the summit.

He said that Egypt has asked the United States to treat Egypt's exports the same way Europe treats Egyptian exports. But he noted that this issue is still being studied and that he does not expect a decision on it before the U.S. election.

Egypt: Proposal To Stage Expanded Arab Summit in Cairo

NC0606211496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2050 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jun (MENA)—AL-AHRAM notes in its issue tomorrow that consultations will take place during the Egyptian-Saudi-Syrian summit in Damascus tomorrow to convene an expanded Arab summit in Cairo soon.

The newspaper said that over 15 Arab countries from the Arab east and west are expected to participate in the proposed Cairo summit.

Egypt: Minister on Cooperation on Seismic Activity in Red Sea

NC0706092096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0840 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Jun (MENA)—Dr. Venice Kamil Judah, minister of state for scientific research affairs, has stated that there are communications hot lines in the region surrounding the Red Sea to monitor seismic activities and exchange information. In a statement to MENA, she said a communications network has been established among the seismic centers in the region and that the circuit is being expanded to cover all the regional centers of the countries adjacent to the al-'Aqabah area so that information and views might be exchanged to alleviate the earthquake disasters in the region. She said that there is a plan in the interest of reducing seismic dangers in the al-'Aqabah region for regional cooperation the al-'Aqabah area. She noted that the European countries are offering $4 million to fund this plan along with scientific support. She noted that Germany, Italy, and Japan have agreed to offer their expertise in this sphere.

Egypt: U.S. Urged To 'Reformulate' Position Toward Libya

NC0606151496 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 31 May 96 p 3

[Editorial: "The Libyan Crisis and Egyptian Moves"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States is now, perhaps, certain that claims concerning the existence of an underground chemical weapons factory 55 km southeast of the Libyan capital Tripoli are false following President Husni Mubarak's assurances that a team of Egyptian experts visited the site and found no signs of chemical facilities.

Washington created an uproar when it charged that Libya was building a chemical weapons factory. U.S.

officials began to voice these accusations haphazardly, as if they were confirmed facts. U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry hinted that the United States might strike a military blow to foil the alleged Libyan project. Unknowingly, he exposed the blind bias on Israel's side at the expense of all the countries of the region.

Washington has ignored that Israel possesses a nuclear arsenal, something to which concerned international institutions attest. Yet the United States has never thought of seriously dealing with this grave threat; instead it enters into strategic military agreements with Israel that increase Israel's military superiority in the region in an unprecedented way. Meanwhile, Libya is under a bizarre siege by the international community because of a complicated and intricate crisis the truth or reasons behind which no one knows. The issue has reached the extent of threatening military attacks, just because some sources speculate that it is building a chemical weapons factory—despite Libya's assertions that what the United States is talking about is nonexistent.

Egypt's moves, in this crisis and in the Lockerbie crisis, have revealed the depth of the role played by Egypt in protecting Arab interests.

The United States now fully realizes that there are no chemical activities in the Tarhunah Mountains area, following President Mubarak's remarks to the FINANCIAL TIMES. Hence, U.S. officials must reformulate Washington's positions toward Libya in light of the Egyptian assurances. They must also show the same interest and enthusiasm in convincing Israel to give up its insistence on keeping its nuclear weapons and to prompt it to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Otherwise, any talk about guaranteeing security and stability in the region becomes illusion.

Libya

Libya: U.S. 'Interference' in Nigerian Affairs Criticized

LD0606193196 Tripoli JANA in English
1752 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al Sayf [Jun] 6, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — Reports indicated that the American assistant secretary of state has stated that he conveyed to the Nigerian authorities what he called the determination of the international community to impose further sanctions on Nigeria in case no improvement was achieved in what he called human rights area in this country.

The Jamahiriyah News Agency African affairs editor commented on America's continued blatant interference in the internal affairs of this African state. The editor said that America has become too arrogant and insane and has stepped past all reason and styled itself, once as a United Nations and once again as the international community. Next time America might style itself as God and announce who will enter heavens and who will enter hell in the hereafter.

The editor wondered where is the international community which is determined to penalize Nigeria if that international community was America and only America. He said if there is an international community capable of imposing sanctions then that international community would have imposed sanctions against America before any other state, in respect of all areas, and particularly human rights area.

Mauritania

Mauritania: French Foreign Minister Signs Financial Agreements

AB0606104396 Paris AFP in French
1806 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] French Foreign Minister Jacques Godfrain arrived in Nouakchott this afternoon for his first visit to Mauritania. During his 48-hour visit, a French source indicates, Mr. Godfrain will sign three financial conventions worth 15.7 million French francs on environment (FF4.7 million) on decentralization (FF10 million) and a one-million grant for the organization of legislative election in Mauritania in October.

The most important of these conventions on the environment sector, is to finance a support project for the conservation and the rehabilitation of the ecosystem of the Ban d'Arguin, a vast breeding ground for fish in the Atlantic Ocean north-west of Nouakchott and where millions of birds come to nest every year.

This project, which is expected to cost five million French francs over a four-year period, is aimed at reinforcing the management of the Ban d'Arguin national park, classified world heritage and which plays an essential role in the renewal of fish reserves.

Mr. Godfrain is to go on a private visit to the Aleg region (in the south of the country) this evening. He will go to the Ban d'Arguin on 6 June. He will later be received by Mauritanian President Maaouiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya and will hold talks with Mauritianian Foreign Minister Sidi Mahmoud Ould Cheikh.

At the end of his sojourn, Mr. Godfrain will hand over a batch of drugs to the Mauritanian authorities to help them fight the cholera epidemic in the River Senegal basin. He will also take part in the ceremony during which one of the two ATR aircraft bought from France will be handed over to Mauritania.

Morocco

Morocco: Labor Leaders, Government Officials Comment on Strike Talks

LD0606135196 Rabat MAP in English
1307 GMT 6 Jun 96

[All names as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, June 6 (MAP) — The two major Moroccan labor unions which have called for a one-day general strike Wednesday [5 June] throughout the country have hailed the "positive" behaviour of the government in dealing with this protest movement that was, according to them massively followed.

Addressing the parliament on Wednesday, a leader of the Istiqlal Party (opposition) to which one of the two labor unions, the "Union Generale des Travailleurs du Maroc" (UGTM) [General Union of Moroccan Workers] is affiliated, said that the government has reacted in a positive way notably through the "discretion" of security forces.

Mohamed el-Khalifa was taking the floor as part of the urgent question posed to the government as to the reasons behind what he described as the "failure" of the social dialogue between the government and the labor unions that was suspended after the pullout of leaders of the two unions, the UGTM and the CDT (Confederation Democratique du Travail) [Democratic Labor Confederation].

The question was adressed to the prime minister, Abdellatif Filali, who was represented in the weekly oral question time of the parliament by minister of state for the interior, Driss Basri.

Basri, who renewed the government's determination to carry on the social dialogue preferred to speak of suspension of these negotiations rather than of "failure".

Basri said the government is ready to resume negotiations as of next Monday to settle pending problems facing the workers. He regretted the attitude of the two labor unions and asked them to be patient.

The way the government dealt with the general strike, a right guaranteed by the Constitution, was also hailed by the leader of the CDT, Noubir Amaoui who told a huge gathering in Casablanca that the movement was followed by nearly 90 per cent of the workers both in the public and private sectors.

Official sources said the strike was observed by only 10 to 65 per cent according to sectors.

Noubir Amaoui also expressed satisfaction at the "responsible behaviour" of the strikers, who followed this movement in calm.

He however warned that another general strike of 72 hours might be observed in case the government fails to honor the workers' claims.

On his part, the UGTM leader, Aberrazak Afilal said the two labor unions are ready to resume dialogue with the government, should the latter proves its determination to negotiate seriously.

No serious incidents were reported throughout the country during Wednesday's strike except in the city of Tangiers (northern Morocco) where scores of youngsters took to the street setting ablaze a bank and storming another. Nearly sixty of these "vandals" were arrested by the police.

The first round of negotiations was aborted few hours after its opening last Monday due to the withdrawal of the two labor unions.

A communique from the department of the prime minister on Tuesday voiced "regret" over the attitude of the two unions.

Saying that they quit the negotiating table "after having posed irrealistic conditions to continue the dialogue".

The communique noticed that the call for the general strike occured when "progress has been achieved and when the government announced the resumption of the social dialogue to examine and settle other pending problems".

The social dialogue called for by the government was described as a "farce" in a communique relased by the CDT and the UGTM.

"We have not been surprised by the incapacity of the government to prove the reality of its willingness to meet the workers' claims", said the communique which arrived to the conclusion that "a government which cannot even settle problems of this kind (notably the employment of the estimated 1500 high degree graduates observing for nearly 20 days a sit-in to claim jobs) is the more powerless in dealing with the social situation as a whole".

Although it has received support from the opposition parties and other associations, the call for the general strike has not been followed by a third major labor union "Union Marocaine du Travail" (UMT, independent) [Moroccan Union of -Labor], which considered it as "political".

The UMT also decided to boycott the first round of negotiations which it said was "improvised" and with "no precise agenda".

The aborted first round of negotiations brought together on Monday the prime minister, Abdellatif Filali, who was leading a several member ministerial delegation and the leaders of the different labor unions, some of them close to the government and others to the opposition.

The "CDT" and the "UGTM", which blame the government and the employers for rejecting continuously any "earnest and responsible" dialogue, claim a general salary increase, namely the guaranteed minimum wage fixed in 1992 to about 1,500 dirhams (less than 200 dollars), social coverage, the creation of a special fund of assistance to unemployed people and the reintegration of workers, fired for activism.

Morocco: 'Wave of Social Unrest' Following General Strike

LD0706084596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] These days the Moroccan arena is witnessing a wave of social unrest following the general strike that the largest Moroccan trade unions called for.

Among the repercussions of this strike was the clash in the city of Tangier yesterday between demonstrators and police forces, which left a number of wounded among the two sides. A report about the issue from Fatima Zohra Arous:

[Arous] MAP said today that 28 people, including 12 members of the security forces, were wounded yesterday in the confrontations that took place between demonstrators and the police in a popular district called Beni Makada in the city of Tangier.

On the basis of a source close to the Moroccan Interior Ministry, the agency pointed out that the intervention of the police had prevented greater human and material losses.

The same sources added that elements of the Moroccan police had later launched a large-scale arrest campaign among the demonstrators, whereby 97 demonstrators were arrested and referred to Moroccan courts. [passage omitted]

At another level, three Moroccan human rights organizations expressed their denunciation of the new attack that Moroccan security forces launched against the unemployed graduates who were staging a sit-in at the headquarters of the Moroccan Labor Union on 2 June.

In their telegram, published today by opposition newspapers, the organizations stressed the government's need to open a dialogue with those concerned. [passage omitted]

Morocco: Opposition Parties To Hold News Conference

LD0606185096 Rabat MAP in Arabic 1530 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Rabat, 6 Jun — Four Moroccan opposition parties — Istiqlal [independence], Socialist Union of Popular Forces, Progress and Socialism, and the Organization for Popular and Democratic Action — are due to hold a news conference in Rabat tomorrow, Friday [7 June]. The leaders of the four parties, which come under the banner of the Democratic Bloc, will address Moroccan and international media at the news conference which is to be held at the offices of the Istiqlal Party in Rabat.

Morocco: Council of Ministers Discuss Strikes, Financial Law

LD0706090196 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Council of Ministers met today under the chairmanship of Abdellatif Filali, prime minister and minister of foreign affairs and cooperation.

At the beginning of this meeting, Mohamed Kabbaj, finance and foreign investments minister, gave a review of the implementation of the transitional financial law in the first six months of 1996.

Regarding this review, Driss Alaoui M'Daghri, communications minister and official spokesman of the government, said:

[Begin M'Daghri recording] In this respect, Kabbaj announced that the overall revenues achieved until the end of May and the expected revenues until the end of this month are generally equivalent to the expectations stipulated in the transitional financial law, together with a noticeable rise in comparison with last year.

Thus, the general revenues reached 31 billion dirhams at the end of May, thereby recording a rise of 9 percent, in which revenues from direct taxes played an important role with an increase of 23 percent, in comparison with the same period last year, particularly those connected with taxes on companies, taxes on general income, and the value added tax.

This naturally reflects the positive results of the recent purging and normalization operations in our country's economy. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Following that, the council discussed the social dialogue file. In this respect, Driss Alaoui M'Daghri, communications minister and official spokesman of the government, added:

[Begin M'Daghri recording] Regarding the social dialogue, Driss Basri, minister of state for the interior and information, talked about the circumstances of 5 June. These were characterized by the spirit of responsibility and discipline. He also touched on different aspects of the presented social file. After discussing this issue, the council decided that the ministerial committee, headed by the prime minister in charge of discussing the dialogue file with the social and economic forces, would meet on 10 June to determine the forthcoming steps and stages of this dialogue. On this occasion, emphasis was laid on the government's readiness to continue contacts with the trade unions and employers, proceeding from the main points on which the trade unions have concentrated, with the aim of finding suitable solutions to the list of demands within the framework of a constructive, responsible, and organized dialogue. [end recording]

Morocco: L'OPINION Editor on Socio-Economic Factors Behind Riots

LD0606164896 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] During the night [5-6 June] calm at last returned to Beni Makada, one of the poorest districts of Tangier, in Morocco. Hundreds of youths, most of them less than 18 years old, wrecked shops in the district, including two banks, yesterday afternoon. The incidents spread to the neighboring district of Birchifa. The security forces intervened with the assistance of cudgels and tear gas to disperse the rioters. Several of them were injured. The exact number is not known.

Several protesters were also arrested. The number varies according to the sources. REUTERS NEWS AGENCY has reported 22 arrests, whereas AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE says that about 50 were arrested.

The troubles occurred on the day of the general strike, called by the Democratic Confederation of Labor and the General Union of Workers in Morocco. However the two trade union movements have both confirmed that the riots have nothing to do with the strike, and that not a single rioter belongs to the unions. Still it is no coincidence that these actions took place in the north of the country, as Khalil Jamai, the editor in chief of the opposition newspaper L'OPINION, explained.

[Begin Jamil recording] The northern region is faced by social and economic difficulties and there was the anti-drug and anti-contraband campaign, and of course, this caused a little anger. This said, one must think that each time, even in Paris, as everybody knows, anywhere else, or in the United States, when there are such actions, like strikes or peaceful demonstrations, there are always troublemakers who come to cause problems.

Thus there is no question of a revolt or of a jacquerie [peasant uprising in Picardy against the nobility in May 1358] or of action to which much political significance should be given. To that must be added the fact that it was the only such incident recorded throughout the country. [end recording]

Bahrain

Bahrain: Bahrain-Hizballah Members' Confessions Reported

JN0606143896 (Internet) Al-Ayyam in English 6 Jun 96

[Report on "confessions" of arrested Bahrain-Hizballah members; published by Al-Ayyam as "adds 5 through 16"; lead report and first four "adds" not available on Al-Ayyam internet site]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Al-Mutaqawwi said that during the meeting, "Wahidi advised me that power in Bahrain should go to the Shiites, and that to achieve this objective, their support is a must."

He said that Wahidi mentioned that he assigned a number of officers to contact al-Mutaqawwi and that he expressed satisfaction over successful efforts to establish the Bahraini Hizballah military council. "He also mentioned that he was regularly briefed on our activities which in turn were taken to higher authorities, and they would continue the support until goals are achieved to overthrow the present regime in Bahrain using armed means and through trained young men," al-Mutaqawwi went on.

"Later, I met Jasim Hasan Mansur Hasan al-Khayyat and Ahmad Sharifi to discuss smuggling arms to Bahrain via sea." He said that in May 1995, another batch of Bahraini students arrived in Qom for military training. "At the time when accusations were made against Iran being behind the troubles and riot acts in Bahrain, the council had a meeting attended by Ahmad Sharifi who said it was an ideal time to send more Bahraini young men since Bahraini authorities are busy with confronting sabotage acts," al-Mutaqawwi said.

He said that one of the problems raised at the meeting was the subject of stamping the passports when entering Iran. "Upon consultations, the Iranian Foreign Ministry agreed to grant entry visas stamped on separate documents. The outcome of the meeting was conveyed to Shaykh Muhammad Mansur in Kuwait and to 'Adil al-Shu'lah in Damascus. We asked al-Shu'lah to liaise with the Iranian Embassy in Damascus via Abu-Hadi who is a senior diplomat," al-Mutaqawwi said.

He said that on 10.06.1995 [10 June 1995] they had another meeting attended by Jasim Hasan Mansur al-Khayyat representing Bahrain Hizballah military council, and by Ahmad Sharifi and Muhammad Rida al-Sadiq representing the Iranian government. "The Iranian view was that Iran is being accused of supporting the acts in Bahrain and it was risky to continue the training. They said that Hizballah in Lebanon will accept training Bahrainis in their camps and orders had already been given to the Iranian Embassy in Damascus to arrange for transport to Lebanon," he said.

The first batch was sent in 15.06.95, he said. "On 4.10.1995, when I was in my flat 48 in the area of Celery [not further identified] in Saudi Arabia, I met with Shaykh Jasim Hasan Mansur Hasan al-Khayyat and Khalil Ibrahim 'Isa 'Ali Husayn al-Hayiki who arrived from Bahrain," al—Mutaqawwi said, adding that at this meeting they discussed sending more Bahrainis to Hizballah camps in Lebanon using the same routes. "I have a permanent residence permit in Iran and all entry and exit visas are stamped on separate documents," said al-Mutaqawwi. Al-Mutaqawwi said "this is my confession I made before the investigating judge on May 10th 1996."

Al-Khayyat said that in April 1993, he was among the first group that was dispatched to "Karg" camp north of Tehran, as were Shaykh 'Adil al-Shu'lah, Shaykh Fu'ad Mubarak Abd-al-'Aziz, Shaykh Sayyid Husayn Sayyid 'Isa Salman and Shaikh Ahmad al-'Asfur. "We had training on kalashnikovs, G3, Beretta, TNT explosives and grenades," he stated. "We received financial support from the Iranian government through cheques drawn on Saderat Bank, and paid by Ahmad Sharif." He said that in September 1994, the second group was sent to "Karg" for training. Then, in November 1994, upon instructions from an Iranian intelligence officer, they formed a secret media office in the United Arab Emirates which was controlled by 'Ali al-Nashabah, he said. He went on to say that in December 1994, they had meetings with Ahmad Sharifi "to make plans for smuggling weapons into Bahrain via sea routes." In May 1995, he said, a delegation grouping himself with Munir 'Abd-al-Rasul Radi Ahmad Ma'tuq, Ahmad 'Ali Shihab and officer Ahmad Sharifi visited the guard camp in the centre of Tehran "where we met General Wahidi who directly reports to 'Ali Khamene'i." A-Khayyat said that Gen. Wahidi promised that "both political leadership and the guard intelligence service will give all support to set up an Islamic republic in Bahrain loyal to Iran." From then onwards, they continued despatching groups to "Karg" camp for training, he said. He said that Ahmad Sharifi explained that to avoid stamping passports of Bahrainis when arriving in Iran, the Foreign Ministry arranged to stamp visas on separate documents. At the end of May 1995, he went on, Shaykh Habib Mansur sent a group of Bahrainis via Shaykh 'Adil al-Shu'lah after liaising with the Iranian embassy in Damascus. "They arrived in Qom to start training on military exercises conducted by Bahraini Hizballah who made it clear that the aim was to overthrow the regime in Bahrain," al-Khayyat stated. "I was responsible for military training, while

'Ali Ahmad Kazim al-Mutaqawwi was responsible for lessons in idealogy and revolutionary plans."

Al-Khayyat went on to say that on June 10, 1995, they had another meeting where he represented the military wing of Bahrain Hizballah together with Shaykh 'Ali Ahmad Kazim al-Mutaqawwi, while the Iranian government was represented by Brigadier Ahmad Sharifi and Brigadier Muhammad Rida al-Sadiq. "The Iranian view focused on accusations against Iran of supporting the troubles in Bahrain and therefore it was arranged to have the training at Hizballah camps in Lebanon," he said. "The Iranians also said they had arranged with the Iranian embassy in Damascus to open secret channels for Bahrainis to travel to Hizballah camps in Lebanon on condition that passports must be lodged with the embassy until the completion of training." He said that the plan was "successful," and that an Iranian diplomat in Damascus called "Abu-Hadi" was responsible for the transporting of Bahrainis to Lebanon. "Abu-Hadi said the embassy would provide all means of transport as instructed by Iranian authotities. A confidential meeting was held in my flat in Damascus to discuss the facilities," al-Khayyat said. "After the meeting, the embassy arranged two cars to take us to Lebanon using truck roads leading to the village of "Janta" south of al-Biqa'." He said that they went to "a building" where they received military uniforms of Hizballah militias. "We then moved to a training camp where we used many types of weapons, guns and self-loading rifles. We had training on the guerrilla wars and civil rioting, topographic sciences and security codes," he said. The training went on for three weeks, "then we moved to another camp in Ba'labakk, about 150 meters away from Imam Mosque. Here we had training on pistols and the light guns," he said. "We later moved to another camp closer to "Messenger Muhammad" camp where we trained on booby trapping certain devices like telephones, electronic circuits and devices," al-Khayyat said. He said that after 10 days, Abu-Hadi accompanied them through the same route back to Damascus and that they received passports.

Al-Khayyat said that both himself and Shaykh 'Adil al-Shu'lah agreed to despatch more Bahrainis to Hizballah camps. "I returned back home on October 10, 1995 and started looking for more qualified recruits," al-Khayyat said. "I spoke to a friend called Khalil Ibrahim 'Isa 'Ali Husayn al-Hayiki to try and convince as many as possible to travel to Lebanon for training and prepare for toppling the government in Bahrain using armed force. I promised him financial support." Al-Khayyat said that in November 1995, Khalil Al-Hayiki, told him that he managed to attract more young men who then left in December 1995 for Syria and Lebanon via secret channels. "I paid all travel expenses," he said. "In November 1995, I left for Saudi Arabia to meet Shaykh 'Ali Ahmad Kazim al-Mutaqawwi in al-Dammam and discussed how to smuggle arms into Bahrain after reciving a pledge from Iranian intelligence officer Ahmad Sharifi to provide every support." Al-Khayyat said that on January 1, 1995 he met Habib 'Abd-al-'Aziz Isma'il and asked him to go to the United Arab Emirates to see Ja'far Mulla Hasan Sahwan "and ask him not to accept any Bahraini in U.A.E. since this was tricky as advised by the military council." He said he did not get the chance to see Ismai'l after that as he was arrested by security in Bahrain. He said that during his meeting with Khalil al-Hayiki, they agreed to open dialogue with political activists and convince them to join Bahrain Hizballah. The money that he received from Shaykh 'Ali Ahmad Kazim al-Mutaqawwi was part of financial support from Iranian authorities and he used part of this money to pay for travel costs for the group who had training. He said that Shaykh 'Isa Ahmad Qasim was aware of their link with the Iranian authorities, and that during the course of his training in "Karg," Shaykh 'Isa was training with Bosnian and Palestinian groups which belong to Hamas and Islamic Jihad in a training camp near to their camp. "This is a (summary) of my confession that I made before the investigating judge on may 10,1996," he said.

The defendant named 'Abbas 'ali Ahmad Hubayl who works as a carpenter said that since 1990 he had been closely following the speeches and activities of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri. "Then I was introduced to Shaykh Muhammad Majid al-Rayyash and we both agreed to implement all his views and calls in opposing the regime in Bahrain," he said in his confession. He said that on one occasion, al-Rayyash proposed that he join a movement called Hizballah and "loyal to the Islamic Republic of Iran whose objective was to topple the system in Bahrain and to take over power by force." He said that when he joined this party, he was told by al-Rayyash that he would act as a link between him and the party leadership in Bahrain under guidance of Shaykh 'abd-al-Amir al-Jamri. Al-Rayyash also told him that both 'Abd-al-Wahhab Husayn and Hasan Mushaymah assist al-Jamri in leading the party, he said. "However He (al-Rayyash) asked me not to raise any subject without informing him, since I have to report to him directly," Hubayl said. "As a mosque preacher I was asked by al-Rayyash to raise during speeches various political and sensational issues. I gave a number of speeches in different mosques and religious places in the area of Sitrah, al-Nuwaydirat, Sanabis, Karzakkan and Karranah," he said. Hubayl said that since 1994, when Bahrain was faced with rioting and sabotage acts, their meetings took a new dimension.

"It was suggested to form sabotage teams to hit and cause damage to public interests," he said. "I was assigned to form teams in area of Sitrah, while al-Rayyash was responsible for the teams in northern villages. I managed to form gangs of young men who are full of hatred towards the ruling system. These young men joined the opposition group without disclosing the name of the party," He said. Hubayl said that al-Rayyash agreed to the list of names he recommended. "My responsibility included supervising their acts and channeling instructions to them regularly. I gave them lessons on forming underground groups upon receiving orders from al-Rayyash who in turn used to receive instructions from Shaykh al-Jamri, 'Abd-al-Wahhab Husayn and Hasan Mushaymah," said Hubayl. "Among my duties, I had to deliver statements and leaflets to members of groups and also to prepare for writing anti-government slogans on walls of various buildings. I was responsible for providing funds to make explosives to use against security," he said. Hubayl said that he received these funds from shaikh al-Rayyash who in turn used to receive it from Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri.

Hubayl said that during one meeting, he asked members of one group to monitor and watch the movements of persons cooperating with the public security. "This has resulted in setting fire to two cars of persons we believed to be working for security," he said. In one of the meetings, Muhammad al-Ghanam and Muhammad al-Tawwash proposed to set fire to the "Oriental Furniture showroom," he said. "We agreed to this and I gave bd [Bahrain Dinars] 300 to al-Tawwash as a reward. Same persons also set fire to Mutawwa' Carpentary showroom in al-'Aqr, upon receiving approval from me and Muhammad al-Rayyash," he said. Hubayl said that in 1995, during a meeting with 'Ali al-Ghanam and 'Abdallah al-Tuq, these two persons proposed to plant explosives at the Bahrain Martime and Mercantile International Company. He said the idea was accepted and he gave them "some money" to put explosives in two BMMI branches in 'Adliyah and the diplomatic area on July 9, 1995. "following these acts we reported it to Shaykh al-Jamri who gave us his blessing," said Hubayl. "During another meeting, 'Ali Hassan al-Ghanam offered to carry out sabotage acts in some tourist locations with the aim of pressuring the authorities to give up and respond to the demands," said Hubayl. "It was suggested the Royal Meridien Hotel be hit. I conveyed the proposal to Shaykh al-Rayyash who agreed to it, and then I spoke to al-Jamri during my meeting with him at Zayn a'-'Abidin Mosque in Bani Jamrah," he went on. "Shaykh al-Jamri agreed and said that the issue of opposition is everyone's concern and we are all expected to act until all demands are met," Hubayl said. "During this meeting I clearly explained to al-Jamri that the groups will hit hotels and important places. He confirmed his consent no matter what the target," he added. "This is a summary of my confesion I made before the investigating judge on February 24, 1996," Hubayl said.

Another defendant, Fakhri 'Abdallah Rashid Khalil, said he worked in the Iranian school since 1991, during which he had the chance to know an Iranian diplomat who worked in the Iranian embassy in Bahrain and whom he identified as Hasan Khaz'ali. He said Khaz'ali used to frequently visit the school and arranged a meeting for him at his residence in Karranah. "He always focused on Iran which he described as the only country which defended the shea'a people in the world," said Khalil of the Iranian diplomat. "He spoke on the need to support and assist Iran to face powers seeking to weaken the country." Khalil also said that Khaz'ali "asked me to gather information on the situation in Bahrain and for any details regarding American troops in Bahrain." Khalil confessed that he managed to arrange all the required information prior to the departure of Hasan Khaz'ali from Bahrain. He was then introduced to a new arriving diplomat whose name was Muhammad Rida Langarlu, he said. "The new diplomat asked me to continue the mission, and we used to meet at the Iranian school. During these meetings, Langarlu asked me to furnish him with details on sabotage acts in Bahrain. I managed to continue the job and provide him with the requested information," Khalil confessed. He said that three years ago, a person called Ahmad Mahdi proposed to him and a number of youth to proceed to Lebanon in order to receive proper training on using weapons. He said he agreed to the proposal, and left for Syria on August 17, 1994, traveling by air since I was banned from entering Saudi Arabia, while the other members of the group traveled by car on the same day. "In Syria, we had a meeting with someone called 'Ali Ahmad Kazim al-Mutaqawwi who provided us with code names to use during the training. Later on he introduced us to an Iranian diplomat called Abu-Hadi who invited us to accompany him in his car," said Khalil. The Iranian diplomat took their passports and they left for Lebanon, but he said as their entry to Lebanon was prepared secretly, their passports were not stamped nor were they subjected to any checking. After arriving in Lebanon they were taken to the al-Biqa' area to settle in a Hizballah camp, he said. "We were provided with military training uniforms, and started training under the guidance of Hizballah personnel," he said. "The training including fixing and reassembling of kalashnikovs, M16 guns and RPG guns. Training on using grenades and TNT explosives, and arranging for booby traps were also among the lessons we had."

Khalil said that after one month, they were taken by car to a building where they handed over the military uniforms and later got into a mercedes car to take them back to Beirut where Abu-Hadi joined them on their journey back to Syria. Before arriving in Syria, they received their passports and later returned back to Bahrain. In December 1995, he was summoned by the security for investigation, he said. "I managed to escape and was accompanied by my friend Sami 'Abdallah Hasan Bu-Hamad, who is another wanted person, to proceed to the house of Husayn 'Ali Hasan Musa in the area of Sihlah," said Khalil. "Our host was aware that I was wanted by the security people." He said that in February, 1996, he managed to obtain a gun with 14 bullets. "The gun was brought to me by a friend upon my request. I used to keep the gun with me all the time, intending to use it against security personnel during any attempts to arrest me," he confessed. "In march 1996, I received another gun with 25 bullets. This was given to me by Hasan Muhammad Muhsin 'Abd-al-Rasul," he said. "However, I gave this gun to my friend Sami 'Abdallah Hasan Bu-Hamad to use against security if he came under threat of arrest." Khalil concluded: "this is my complete confession made before investigating judge on May 15, 1996."

Another defendant, Husayn Yusuf Ibrahim Muhammad 'Ali, a chemical engineering student at the university of Bahrain, said that after receiving his diploma he left for Kuwait accompanied by his brother 'Abbas. "Before leaving, my other brother 'Abd-al-Amir introduced me to Ra'id al-Ghasrah who mentioned he knew three persons in Kuwait: Husayn al-Ma'tuq, a Kuwaiti citizen, Husayn al-Ghasrah, another Kuwaiti whose nickname was Abu-Sadiq and Muhammad Habib, a Bahraini clergyman residing in Kuwait. Ra'id gave us full details of the addresses in Kuwait to my brother 'Abd-al-Amir," he said. 'Ali said that upon arrival in Kuwait, they contacted Shaikh Muhammad Habib and when they met, they were informed that Ra'id al-Ghasrah was behind their trip. "He arranged a flat for us to stay and also paid for food and other services," he said. Days later, Shaykh Habib offered to arrange for them to go to Mecca for pilgrimage, he said. "He paid us all expenses and we left by car," he said. Following the visit to Mecca, they returned to Kuwait when Shaykh Habib "suggested that both himself and his brother go to Lebanon for military training, aimed at confronting the government in Bahrain," he said. Both had agreed to the offer, and Shaykh Muhammad Habib arranged for them to go by road to Syria advising that upon arrival they would be met by Shaykh 'Adil al-Shu'lah who would arrange for the travel to a training camp. Al-Shu'lah advised them that the trip to Iran would take place without the passports being stamped on arrival, he said. "We knew that al-Shu'lah had contacts with an Iranian diplomat who arranged the travel. We left for Tehran accompanied by another Iranian diplomat. We landed in Tehran airport. He introduced us to another Iranian who took us in a private car to the city of Qom, where we stayed in the residence of Shaykh Jassim al-Khayyat who is a Bahraini citizen. In this house, al-Khayyat gave us training on using arms, while another person called 'Ali with code name Abu-Zaynab gave us lesson on security and intelligence technique," said 'Ali. He said that after a while, they received a message from 'Adil al-Shu'lah to go back to Syria, and returned to Damascus as a group of six.

After two days in Damascus, 'Adil al-Shu'lah arranged for two taxis to take them back to the Iranian embassy, 'Ali said. From there, they moved to two Mercedes cars driven by Lebanese drivers. "We traveled to Lebanon using secret routes to avoid stamping the passports," he said. "We arrived at a military camp belonging to Hizballah and from there we moved to another camp called 'the great messenger.'" He said that a number of Lebanese militants gave them training on light, medium and heavy weaponry. "We also had lessons on using coded names and topographic science. They also trained us on using explosives and techniques of making bombs," he said. Following several weeks of training, they were moved to the al-Biqa' for another package of military training, he said. "Days after we moved to a third camp called "Revenge of God" at Janta area. There we had training on booby traps and explosives," he said. Later, he and his brother returned to Syria, from where he and his brother left for Kuwait by car, he said. "My brother left for Bahrain and I followed him after a few days. This is a (summary) of my confession before the investigating judge on April 20, 1996," 'Ali said.

The defendant Husayn Ahmad Jasim al-Mudayfa' said that in April this year he had a chat with a friend, Sayyid Ibrahim Nasir Yusuf Nasir, who explained to him the scope of events in Bahrain and told him that "the next stage will be confronting the government using armed forces." He quoted his friend as telling him that it was "essential that young believers must contribute." The friend offered to arrange for his travel to Lebanon for military training at Hizballah camps and to pay for all expenses, he said. He told him that other groups of shiite young men agreed and he would arrange for their travel in small groups to avoid any suspicion. On April 14, 1996, he left with a group of colleagues for Syria by car to be met on arrival by Shaykh 'Adil al-Shu'lah who told them it was not appropriate to travel to Lebanon due to heavy fighting between Israel and Hizbollah, he said. "He started giving an ideological lesson and urged us to pursue every means against the regime in Bahrain," al-Mudayfa' said. He said that on April 30, 1996, 'Adil al-Shu'lah gave them coded names and asked them to accompany him to the Iranian embassy in Damascus to meet Hajj Hasan, an Iranian diplomat, who asked for their passports. Later, he arranged two cars for them driven by Lebanon, al-Mudayfa' said. [sentence as received] The cars moved to the Lebanese border using secret routes and then to a house belonging to Hizballah where they received military uniforms and started training on weapons and explosives, he said. They returned to Damascus using similar secret routes, he said. "We met Hajj Hasan who gave us our passports and on May 11, 1996 we returned back to Bahrain," he added. That he said was the essence of the confession that he made before the investigating judge on May 15, 1996.

Bahrain: States Offer Support, Condemn Iran's 'Intervention'

LD0506134796 Riyadh SPA in English
1235 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, June 5, SPA — A number of countries have reiterated their support to Bahrain vis-a-vis the Iranian plots against it.

Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah received yesterday telephone calls from Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, the president of the United Arab Emirates, and Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, who reiterated their support to Bahrain and their condemnation of the Iranian intervention in the domestic affairs of Bahrain.

Meanwhile, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, during a meeting with the Bahraini minister of education in the Syrian city of Latakia reiterated the concern of Syria about the stability of Bahrain.

In Washington, a spokesman for the state department said the U.S. Administration will seriously consider the accusations of the Bahraini officials against Tehran.

Washington firmly supports Bahrain and views with anxiety any foreign attempt to undermine its stability, the spokesman said.

In Paris, a spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry expressed support to the measures undertaken by the Bahraini Government to ensure law and order in the emirate.

Earlier, the Bahraini premier had received a telephone call from Kuwaiti crown prince. The Kuwaiti crown prince deplored the Iranian intervention in the domestic affairs of Bahrain.

Meanwhile, the Bahraini amir received on Monday [3 June] a telephone call from King Husayn of Jordan. King Husayn deplored the Iranian intervention in the domestic affairs of Bahrain and reiterated the support of his country to Bahrain.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak also, in his telephone call with the Bahraini amir, reiterated the support of Egypt to Bahrain.

Bahrain: Hamad Receives Calls of Support From Saudi, UAE Officials

JN0506193096 Manama WAKH in Arabic
0505 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 5 Jun (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, heir apparent and commander-in-chief of Bahraini Defense Force, received a telephone call last night from Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector general. Prince Sultan expressed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's full support for the measures adopted by the State of Bahrain to maintain its security and stability.

Prince Sultan expressed his condemnation of the acts of sabotage that Bahrain faced, and emphasized Saudi support for the State of Bahrain in face of these acts. He wished Bahrain all progress, stability, and prosperity.

Shaykh Hamad also received two phone calls last night from Lieutenant General Pilot Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, chief of staff in the United Arab Emirates [UAE], and His Highness Shaykh Hamdan Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, UAE minister of state for foreign affairs.

The two ministers voiced their condemnation of the acts of sabotage that Bahrain faced, and expressed UAE support for the State of Bahrain and all the measures it adopted to preserve its security and stability.

The heir apparent expressed gratitude and appreciation for Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Zayid and Shaykh Hamdan Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan for their noble feelings toward the State of Bahrain and wished the UAE, under the leadership of Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, full progress and prosperity.

Qatar

Qatar: Information Ministry To Be Abolished; TV, Radio To Be Independent

LD0606203396 Tripoli JANA in Arabic
1730 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Doha, 6 Jun [JANA] — Qatar yesterday decided to abolish the Ministry of Information and Culture and transform the radio and television network into an independent public network.

A statement of the Council of Ministers, released by the Qatari news agency, indicates that it has been decided to abolish the Ministry of Information and Culture and that the cultural issues will be dealt with by the Ministry of Education. The statement adds that the radio and television network has been turned into an independent public network, while the Qatari news agency will be turned into a public institution dependent on the Foreign Ministry.

The Foreign Ministry will also deal with news concerning foreign issues.

Yemen

Yemen: Interior Ministry Reports Riots in al-Mukalla City

JN0606210696 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at the Interior Ministry has stated the following to the SABA' NEWS AGENCY:

At noon today, 6 June 1996, a group of troublemakers in the city of al-Mukalla, the governorate of Hadhramaut, staged riots during a First Instance Court session to look into a certain case. The aim of the rioters was to influence the court's decision.

The troublemakers tried to attack the court and some government offices and burned the car of the prosecutor.

The security forces in cooperation with the citizens confronted them, and the confrontation resulted in injuring two of the troublemakers. Those who started the troubles were arrested.

While thanking the brother citizens who cooperated with the police in aborting the sabotage attempt, the Interior Ministry issues a stern warning to all those who toy with the idea of tampering with security or undermining satbility and public safety.

Yemen: Prime Minister on Agreement With Eritrea, Ties to Arabs

NC0606071196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0505 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jun (MENA)—Yemeni Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani reiterated that his country is eager and committed to finding a peaceful solution for its dispute with Eritrea, over the islands of Hanish, in order to spoil the schemes of those trying to create international and regional problems in the Red Sea.

He told AL-AHRAM today that the dispute concerns the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir alone, because the Eritreans encroached on that island. All that the Eritreans say are nothing but claims, he said, pointing out that Yemen has sought a peaceful solution from the outset, because it believes that the Eritrean aggression was not just an invasion. He explained that the invasion was backed by other parties, which he did not name. 'Abd-al-Ghani believes that the matter should be handled with Eritrea directly, since it is the visible party in the dispute.

The Yemeni prime minister added that the French role was in the framework of the Egyptian and Ethiopian efforts, and that this role continued until the Yemeni and Eritrean sides signed a declaration of principles in Paris on 21 May, in the presence of Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa. He noted, however, that the French role did not end with the signing of the agreement and that it will continue until the technical committee reaches an arbitration agreement.

Asked about American-Eritrean naval maneuvers and their impact on the U.S. position on the dispute, he said: We considered the maneuvers a bilateral matter concerning the two countries, particularly since the United States has voiced support for the French mediation.

Touching on the security agreement Yemen signed recently with Djibouti, he said that it guarantees to each side the right to maintain security and stability and that neither country will be used as a base for hostile acts by groups or individuals against the other.

The Yemeni prime minister praised relations between Egypt and Yemen, noting that they were consolidated by President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih's visit to Egypt last March and the security agreement the two countries signed. He noted that the agreement stipulates that neither country will be used as a base for sabotage or hostile operations against the other and that neither country will allow any individual or group of individuals to shake security and stability in the other.

'Abd-al-Ghani affirmed that normalcy has been restored to relations between Yemen and the Gulf states. The border dispute with the Sultanate of Oman has been settled and the problem with Saudi Arabia will be resolved in the same spirit, he said. He added that Yemen's relations with the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain are excellent. Relations with Kuwait will be restored one day, particularly since Yemen has no reservations on this matter, he said.

Iraq: Assembly Official Denounces Iranian Moves in Bahrain

JN0606154696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1240 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 6 Jun (INA)—Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, chairman of the Arab and International Relations Committee at the National Assembly, denounced the Iranian regime's attempts to interfere in the domestic affairs of Bahrain and reassert Iran's old ambitions in that country .

In a statement here today, he denounced the Tehran government's declaration that the three Arab islands in the Arabian Gulf, Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra, and Abu Musa, are Iranian territory, stressing the Arabism of these islands, as well as their belonging to the United Arab Emirates.

Hammudi said that Iran's plans to hold on to the Iraqi POW's in violation of Security Council Resolution 598 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, as well as its refusal to return the Iraqi planes, prevent the normalization of Arab-Iranian relations and necessarily serve the imperialist and Zionist enemies of Arabism and Islam.

Concluding his statement, Hammudi urged the Iranian regime to respect the Arab nation's rights, sovereignty, and options and to abandon its desire for trusteeship, as well as its interference in the domestic affairs of the region's countries—interference, which foreign sides use to increase their military presence in this strategic part of the world.

Iraq: Daily Calls Restoring Ties to Syria 'Vital Step'

JN0506201096 Baghdad INA in English 1030 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Jun 5, INA—An Iraqi daily has called upon the Arab rulers to reconsider their surrenderist approach and work towards rebuilding the Arab camp by passing their minor and secondary differences and close their ranks, adding that one essential step in this direction is to end their boycott of Iraq that was dictated upon them by America.

"THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER" in its commentary on "Netanyahu's Coercive Diplomacy," said Arab rulers who have been giving enormous concessions to the Zionists and imperialists have from now on to deal with the coercive diplomacy of the Likud leader who has made it clear in his election campaign that he intends to hold on the Golan heights, Eastern Jerusalem and accelerate the building of new Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab territories.

It said the Arab rulers who resigned themselves to wretchedness, humiliation and defeat should reconsider their unwarranted rush towards the normalization of relations with the Zionist entity, because the Zionists with the imperialists cannot change their skin and turn into peace loving partners simply because some rulers have dropped the military option to support their diplomatic endeavors to regain Arab usurped rights in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria.

Some Arab rulers went even further in their treacherous attitudes by openly conniving and cooperating with the enemies of the Arab nation to destroy the military potentials of Iraq that has managed to redress the imbalance of power with the Zionist entity, the paper added.

The paper charged those rulers of deliberately neglecting that the Zionist entity is a nuclear power and insist on disarming Iraq.

It said following Netanyahu winning the elections, those rulers would have to bury their heads in the sand to protect themselves from the scourges of aggressive action that would be carried out by Netanyahu and Sharon in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria.

The paper pointed out that those rulers went now to the U.S. president to apply some pressure on Netanyahu to be less hawkish and modify his aggressive policies, but it noted that Clinton himself is a hostage to Zionist vote in the election year.

"THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER" stressed that without a strong Iraq some Arab rulers are faced in a humiliating manner to shake hands with their adversaries.

It said to counter renewed Zionist and other foreign challenges Syrian-Iraqi relations should be normalized and restored as a necessary and vital step to contain the total collapse of Arab system. This should be followed by further steps to end all Arab differences as a prelude to bring about the full normalization of relations between all Arab countries regardless of their political choices.

The prevailing logic of the world today is that the aggressive force and hegemony, and the Arab are the victims of such brutal tendencies, the paper concluded [sentence as received].

Israel: Netanyahu Calls al-Asad Message 'Positive'

TA0606175496 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad believes an arrangement with Netanyahu's government could be attained quickly. He told as much to a senior French figure who visited Damascus in recent days. [passage omitted]

Our correspondent Eldad Beck reports from Paris that al-Asad spoke about the possibility of Syrian compromises on the Golan Heights in exchange for Israeli compromises in Lebanon. [passage omitted]

Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen learned from Netanyahu's bureau this evening that if such a message has indeed been relayed, then it is a positive message. The prime minister-elect's media adviser said that Netanyahu will conduct negotiations with the Syrians and that his position on the Golan issue is known.

Israel: Netanyahu on 'Partial' Accords With Syria, Retaining Golan

TA0706090396 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 7 Jun 96 p 1

[Report by David Makovsky, Hillel Kuttler, Eldad Beck, and news agencies]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The talks with Syria do not have much hope of progressing if prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu refuses to discuss concessions on the Golan Heights, a senior Clinton administration official said yesterday. [passage omitted]

Netanyahu, visiting Haifa, al-Tayyibah, and Netivot yesterday, made his first specific reference to Syria since being elected.

"I think there are additional ways to advance confidence-building between Syria and Israel, and alleviate the tension and the existing situation of hostility ahead of full peace and a peace treaty," he told reporters.

He insisted that he wants to hold talks with Syria, but indicated that he does not want to yield the Golan. "We have already had talks. We started at Madrid and we made it clear to al-Asad that we will remain on the Golan Heights," he said.

Netanyahu has said he would favor partial agreements with Syria on issues such as water, and could envision helping Damascus get off the State Department list of countries sponsoring terrorism if it expelled terrorists from its soil. US officials have privately expressed the belief that this idea is unworkable.

Meanwhile, Foreign Ministry Director-General Uri Savir and senior IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers briefed Netanyahu aides Dore Gold and Dani Nave on the Lebanon monitoring group which is being established in the aftermath of Operation Grapes of Wrath.

A decision on the scope and responsibilities of the group must be made within the next week, sources said. Savir has already briefed Gold on Hebron, and is expected to shortly brief him on technical aspects of Oslo 2.

According to information reaching THE JERUSALEM POST in Paris regarding a recent meeting between al-Asad and a French figure in Damascus, the Syrian leader believes he can reach an agreement with Netanyahu by way of US mediation.

Al-Asad said the agreement will include not only the Golan, but also Lebanon, hinting that Israeli concessions over Lebanon will enable Syria unspecified flexibility on the Golan.

According to the French figure, Syria is in favor of Netanyahu's position rejecting Palestinian statehood.

French diplomatic sources insist there have been indirect contacts between Netanyahu and the Syrian government prior to the elections. The sources say a "communication channel" has been established enabling the two sides to exchange messages.

Netanyahu has denied that he has sent any messages to the Syrians.

Israel: Meridor Discusses Likud Government's Policies

TA0606180396 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1530 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Interview with Likud Knesset Member Dan Meridor by correspondents Eli Nisan and Menashe Bahar in the studio on 6 June—recorded, in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles; translated from the Hebrew]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Nisan] Mr. Meridor, what is your reaction to 'Arafat's statement that he intends to declare a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital?

[Meridor] I think that our position, that the position of the future Likud government and, I believe, even of the entire Israeli nation, including those who will now be in the opposition, is unequivocal. Jerusalem will remain the capital of Israel alone and entirely under Israel's sovereignty, and declarations will not change this fact.

I would add that unilateral declarations and statements are not the right way to conduct contacts and negotiations.

[Nisan] Is the very fact that such a declaration was made in yesterday's summit in Jordan a provocation against the Likud government?

[Meridor] I don't want to use harsher words than the ones I used. Our position is unequivocal and clear. There is no room for any change in Jerusalem's sovereignty, there is no room in Jerusalem for the capital of another state. The only state is Israel, and only Jerusalem is its capital. Clearly, full freedom of prayers, access, and worship to all faiths — Muslims, Christians, and Jews — will continue to prevail in Jerusalem. Whoever wants to hold contacts and negotiations had better focus on things that are achievable rather than on things that are unattainable.

[Bahar] Will you close Orient House and all the Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem where political activity is also held?

[Meridor] We spoke about it throughout the election campaign and in recent days. I don't think it would be right today, before the government has been established, to state explicitly what will be done and how. There is no doubt that our positions, as voiced during the election campaign, are known to the public. As for what the government will do on the issue of Orient House, Hebron, and other questions you will ask me, let me answer you now: The government will meet, discuss, and decide.

[Bahar] In his victory speech Netanyahu did not at all mention the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in Hebron. Was this issue ignored intentionally?

[Meridor] In his speech about his and our victory in the elections Netanyahu mentioned the most general issues. I believe he intentionally abstained from going into detail about political moves since this was not the right place to do it. I must say that the authority to make such a decision lies with the government under his leadership. He is not yet the incumbent prime minister but only the prime minister-designate, and we have not yet formed a government. Therefore, I assume that the right time to deal with the matter will be when we form the government in another one, two, or three weeks; I don't know exactly when. I think this is the right way to proceed, and I suggest that we arm ourselves with patience until we form a government and we announce how we will proceed on the path to peace with our policy and goals.

[Nisan] Do you see room for cooperation in the future between an Israeli government led by the Likud and the Palestinian Authority [PA]?

[Meridor] I will tell you what I believe are the four parameters that should be applied in the future. One of them is positive. We have inherited a certain reality which is a fact. Israel Police is headed by a commissioner, and if he asks us whether he should talk with his counterpart in order to prevent drug trafficking he will not be told not to do so. If the head of the Shin Bet asks us whether it should deal with security problems, the answer will be of course. The same applies to customs officers and all sorts of committees. After all, this is not just an agreement but a structure encompassing all spheres of life. Therefore, we definitely need to work together. We have no interest to do harm. On the contrary, I think our interest is to enable the Palestinians in the territories ruled by the PA to develop themselves, improve their economy, take care of their own lives and institutions — this is one aspect.

The other aspect is a very resolute one. Let nobody think that we will allow the situation to degenerate into terror. A big effort will be made, and they should make a big effort likewise in keeping with the agreement, to uphold their commitments to prevent terror, to disarm the armed groups that are threatening to engage in terror. There was almost no terror in the past two months. This situation must continue. It is a condition for coexistence, which includes the positive aspect I mentioned before.

Third, it should be noted to Labor's credit that in recent years it pursued the policy of expanding settlements. For example, 1,300 apartments are being built today in Ma'ale Adumim. I congratulate the Palestinians and the Americans who did not speak out against it. The thousands of apartments being built are proof that the Arabs and the Americans accept this fact. Therefore, in those places we decide upon, we will have to pursue this activity.

Fourth, conducting contacts and talks about how to go about the future. All four points — cooperation, our firm security position, the settlement policy, and the contacts at levels to be decided upon — must together form a policy that will lead to a stabilization of the situation, to prevent terror, to possible prosperity, and to cautious and gradual progress in order to bring more and more peace and stability in the region.

[Nisan] Does all this spell cooperation between the Israeli Government and the PA at the ministerial level?

[Meridor] Mr. Netanyahu said before the elections that if he has to, although he does not like it, he will personally be prepared to meet; other people said what they did. I don't think it would be right for me to add anything to what has been said on the issue. The next government, after assuming power, will have to decide how to hold the contacts, who will hold them, in what way, at what level, and when. The government will have to decide on all these questions, and I don't want to elaborate on them now; first, because we are not yet the government, and secondly, because I simply don't know what will be decided.

[Nisan] Sir, talks about the permanent arrangement in the territories are scheduled to open next month. Do you see the talks officially opening and ending within three to five years?

[Meridor] I don't exactly know what will happen in a month or in the time you mention. I only want to say that when a timeframe is decided upon this is not meant to have one side making concessions while the other side waits. If the idea is to reach an agreement there should be willingness on both sides to reach an accord that does not represent all their wishes. I hear that the Palestinian side is demanding everything, and my only response is that I am demanding everything.

[Nisan] When you say everything, do you mean Jerusalem?

[Meridor] I watched the opening of the talks about a month ago and heard their demands for everything. If I understand correctly, they want a Palestinian state, the 1967 borders, a solution of the problem of the refugees, perhaps the right of return, and they want Jerusalem.

[Bahar] Couldn't this attest to the panic on the Palestinian side?

[Meridor] In the face of these demands our demand is clear: This area should not be under Arab but under Israeli sovereignty. If they want to talk after the opening statements then let them talk sensibly. We will say our piece, and we'll see where we get.

[Bahar] Couldn't this attest to the situation of the PA? They may be fearful of a Likud government. When they see the Likud's platform, maybe they tell themselves: Perhaps they will give us nothing, and we won't be able to pursue the process. Can you understand their serious apprehension about a Likud government?

[Meridor] The Likud government is not the Labor government. The Israeli people had to choose between two options, and it did. It was not a choice between war and peace. Both Labor and the Likud, actually all of Israel, want peace. The argument is about the conditions and about the way to peace. Our way is different, our conditions are different, and everybody knows it. This does not mean that we do not want to attain peace, quite the contrary. This does not mean that we will not reach agreements. On the contrary, I am proud to say that the Likud, through the late Menahem Begin, was the one that opened the peace process with Egypt. The Likud was the one that summoned the Madrid conference in October 1991; the Likud was the one that for many years held very close contacts with King Husayn away from the public eye and established very good relations with the Jordanian monarchy, relations that are very important to us to this day and should continue to be developed. The Likud is indeed interested in the peace move. The Likud is also interested in our rights, the rights of the Jewish people, and the Likud is also interested in security for Israel. We believe that a peace that is not based on security and stability will not endure. There are disagreements between us and the Arab side about the essence and contents of peace. All these must be discussed in negotiations.

[Nisan] Can all these disagreements be bridged?

[Meridor] There were discussions in the past, and they may be held again in the future. We will know the answer at the end of the road.

[Bahar] Syria was absent from the list of countries mentioned by the prime minister-elect in his first address, when he called on Arab states to continue the peace process. Will there be anything the Likud government, which has been branded with the slogan of nonwithdrawal from the Golan Heights, will be able to discuss with Syria?

[Meridor] An interesting thing happened with Syria which, I think, merits a word or two. President al-Asad had four years to reach an agreement with the Government of Israel headed by the late Yitzhaq Rabin and by Shim'on Peres. To my deep regret, they practically offered him the entire Golan Heights, or almost the entire Golan Heights — and yet he did not budge. He did not smile or change any of his stands. Everything remained as it had been. Why? Because the theory that all that bothers President al-Asad is the Golan Heights was evidently erroneous.

I would like to list four more compound factors which have never been mentioned. One of them is the substance of peace: What kind of peace will we get from Syria? Will President al-Asad, with his rigid, dictatorial regime built on force, be able to see thousands of Israelis eating humus in Damascus every Saturday? [Laughing] Or rather, on weekdays, in view of the present coalition. Is he ready to make true peace, similar to the peace between us and Jordan and to the kind we would like to develop with additional Arab states? This question is entirely unclear at this point. I have heard no clear Syrian answer on this matter; actually, I have heard the opposite.

The second question refers to the security arrangements concerning the Golan Heights, on which we have frequently voiced our stand, which differs from that of Labor. Was al-Asad amenable to adequate security arrangements in the era of Mr. Peres and Mr. Rabin? In my opinion, he was not. The third factor is Lebanon. Can there be peace with Syria while Lebanon continues to permit Hizballah to fire katyushas? The fourth compound factor is Iran, which has built an axis together with Syria. Iran is a radical, dangerous country spreading terror and trying to build a nuclear capability with Israel as a target. It has been using Lebanon as a playground from which to attack us. Is al-Asad prepared to confront them, to stop Hizballah to the best of his ability, and to opt for an agreement with Israel?

The last factor is the relations with the United States. Does al-Asad understand that he will not get from America what al-Sadat did, because I cannot see Mr. (?Gingrich) and Mr. Dole handing over the money.

[Bahar] Will the Likud expect al-Asad [words indistinct] to reach negotiations?

[Meridor] No. That is why what I said does not pertain to the future. As for the past, why didn't al-Asad accept the agreement proposed by the Labor rule? He is evidently interested in a few more things to which Israelis have always paid little attention. President al-Asad says he wants the entire Golan Heights. President al-Asad says he is ready to make peace. I am telling President al- Asad the very same things: I want peace, and I want the entire Golan Heights. Does he sound reasonable when he says it? Then I will sound as reasonable when I say it. And if he wants to talk, he can come and talk.

[Nisan] In this context, Mr. Meridor, what do you think of the former Mosad chief's statement that he does not believe al-Asad is seeking peace. Is it compatible with the Likud stand?

[Meridor] Our various intelligence bodies had to answer this difficult question on whether al-Asad has undergone a truly radical change: whether he has accepted the Jewish state's existence in the Middle East, whether he wants to live in peace with it, whether he has ceased contemplating war, or whether it was all tactics. His arrival in Madrid on our terms was a fact; he held face-to-face talks with us, although he had sworn never to do it; he talked to us without any previous promises on our part, on the part of the Shamir government which said he would not get a millimeter of land; he came to talk with us in direct talks, and not at an international conference. We might say, therefore, that President al-Asad's tactics have changed, although the question of whether the change was a profound and genuine one, whether he is truly prepared to make genuine peace with Israel remains open. There have been disparate views on that, and the view of my good friend Shabtay Shavit, the former Mosad chief, is one of them. Since no one has been inside President al-Asad's head, no one knows what he is thinking. Anyway, I do not think his thoughts are very important. We will judge him on his deeds. During the past four years we tried one option — that of concessions, which did not bring peace. Now we have to try a different approach.

[Bahar] What role will the government, a member of which you are certain to be, assign to Egypt? President Mubarak declared yesterday that if the Likud government continues the peace process, it will have Egypt's support, and if it does not, they will review the situation.

[Meridor] The Likud was the one to launch the peace ties with Egypt. The men who started it — the late Menahem Begin and Anwar al-Sadat — are no longer with us. Egypt could have been the cornerstone of a comprehensive peace move. Peace with Egypt is important for Israel, and peace with Israel is important for Egypt. That is my belief. In the quest for Middle East stability, Egypt, Israel, and Jordan — three countries at peace with each other — are a structure that others should be asked to join, and yet one that can be the basis of stability in itself. To make this stability viable and to make future additions possible, Israel-Egypt relations have to develop far beyond their present range. Their failure to register greater development has not been our fault. I do not know why we have not seen more Egyptian intellectuals in Israel; why Israeli tourists visit Egypt, but very few Egyptians come to Israel; why there has been insufficient encouragement of stronger ties with not just the official regime, but with Egyptian society, with its rich people and those who are less than rich, with economists, industrialists, lawyers, doctors, engineers. I think peace with Egypt matters a great deal to us, but it is equally important that Egypt enhance the legitimization of the relations with Israel within Egyptian society. Good Israel-Egypt relations, as well as good Israel-Jordan relations, are unquestionably a sound foundation for a more stable Middle East. [passage omitted]

Israel: 'Draft' Likud Government Guidelines Reported

TA0706095296 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 7 Jun 96 p 3

[Report by Arye Bender]

[FBIS Translated Text] **No to a Palestinian state, no partition of Jerusalem, and no Golan concessions — these are the three major noes in the guidelines of the new government, as in a written draft obtained by MA'ARIV. The draft, that still needs to be approved by the coalition partners and Binyamin Netanyahu, promises a resumption of the settlement drive in the territories: "The settlement enterprise in all parts of the country is an expression of our right to the land, and is an indivisible part of national security. The government will guarantee the continuation and development of the new settlements, and will allocate the necessary resources for it," the Settlement clause of the draft says.**

The Oslo Accords are not mentioned in the draft, but Clause H states that "the government will conduct negotiations with the Palestinian Authority for the attainment of a permanent arrangement of peace, while carefully observing Israel's security needs, including the implementation of the Palestinian commitment to prevent terror activity, turn in murderers, and stop incitements against Israel."

The Guidelines

The government will work from a belief that the right of the Jewish nation to Eretz Yisra'el is unquestionable, and from a realization that the State of Israel is the democratic state of the Jewish nation and that its main purpose is an ingathering the Jewish nation into the country. The aspiration to attain true peace with all our neighbors, while observing national and personal security, is the main goal of the government policy. The new government's policy will be based on the following principles:

1. **Accelerating immigration** and absorbing immigrants. 2. **Bolstering settlement** throughout the country, expanding and developing it. 3. **Increasing security,** both national and personal, preventing war, and expanding the circle of peace. 4. Creating conditions for a free economy, a thriving market, and social justice. 5. Cultivating the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish democratic state, and observing equality between the force of the majority and human and minorities' rights.

Immigration and Absorption

Recognizing the common destiny of and partnership in the struggle for the existence of the Jewish nation in Eretz Yisra'el and in the Diaspora, and aspiring to fulfill the main goal of Israel — the ingathering of the Jewish nation — the government will work determinately to enhance immigration, rescue persecuted Jews, and create the social, economic, and spiritual conditions for a quick and successful assimilation of immigrants in the homeland.

Settlement

The settlement enterprise in all parts of the country is an expression of our right to the land, and is an indivisible part of our national security. **The government will guarantee the continuation and development of new settlements,** and will allocate the necessary resources.

Foreign Relations and Defense

Israel's foreign and defense policy will be based on the following principles:

A. The main goal is **expanding the circle of peace** with all our neighbors, while recognizing the state's defense might.

B. Diligently increasing the power of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and other defense arms in order to deter the enemy, prevent war, and protect the state and its residents.

C. Deepening peace relations between Israel and Egypt and Jordan, upgrading the level of relations with additional Arab states, and aspiring for a mutual recognition between Israel and Arab countries with which Israel has no relations.

D. Cultivating the friendly and close relations between Israel and the United States on the basis of both countries' commitment to the values of freedom, justice, and democracy.

E. The government will work to promote friendly relations between Israel and all peace-seeking countries.

F. The government will initiate and participate in international activities against terror organizations and countries that give them aid and asylum.

G. The government will struggle against expressions of anti- Semitism worldwide.

H. **The government will conduct negotiations with the Palestinian Authority for the attainment of a permanent arrangement of peace, while carefully observing Israel's security needs, including the implementation of the Palestinian commitment to prevent terror activity, turn in murderers, and stop incitements against Israel.**

I. The government will activate the IDF and the defense arms persistently and determinately against the threat of Arab terror, and will vouch for the security of all the residents of this country and members of the Jewish nation **everywhere.**

J. **The government will oppose the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.**

K. **Undivided Jerusalem, the eternal capital of Israel, is the one city under Israel's sovereignty that is indivisible.** All religions will be promised freedom of worship and free access to holy sites. **The government will frustrate any attempt to harm the indivisibility of Jerusalem and will prevent any activity that does not coincide with Israel's exclusive sovereignty over the city.**

The government will place significant resources at the disposal of the Jerusalem City Council **for the enhancement of construction,** the improvement of municipal services for the Arab residents, and for bolstering the economic and social standing of **Greater Jerusalem.**

L. Israel will guard the essential water resources in Judaea and Samaria.

M. **The eastern border of the State of Israel will be the Jordan River. This will be the permanent border line between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan.**

N. The Golan Heights is an area essential to the existence of Israel. **The Golan is an important Zionist settlement region of the state, that is essential for its security** and for the preservation of water resources. **The government will insist on Israel's sovereignty over the Golan in any peace arrangement,** and will bolster settlement enterprises on the Golan.

Economy

The government will work to strengthen the economy, reduce government involvement in the market, expand growth, reduce the deficit, and narrow the gap between imports and exports with the following means:

A. **Formulating and implementing an extensive privatization policy** by selling government-owned businesses to private concerns.
B. **Lowering the tax burden.**
C. Encouraging the capital market and restoring the public's confidence in it.
D. Making structural changes in the economy while cutting down on bureaucracy.
E. Encouraging small businesses and private enterprises.
F. Fighting inflation through a combined fiscal and monetary policy, cutting the budget deficit, and reducing government expenditures.
G. Encouraging increased productivity.

Society

The development of the economy will allow the construction of a strong society, equally distributing the tax burden, improving the situation of the development towns and deprived neighborhoods, creating new jobs, and increasing aid for the weak strata. The government will work to introduce **social justice for all** and provide equal opportunities while acknowledging the right of every person to lead an honorable life with quality, while aspiring to create balance between encouraging private enterprise and the commitment to protect the weak. The government will work to **narrow [social] gaps,** and for the promotion, industrialization, and true development of the development towns and the rehabilitation of the deprived neighborhoods. The government will work to improve individual welfare, while guaranteeing employment and housing for all, care for the elderly, introducing a long school day in stages and a gradual expansion of the Compulsory Education Law, and expanding resources for academic education, helping individuals pay education wages, and assisting discharged soldiers. The government will conduct an uncompromising struggle against the drug plague as a national task.

[In a boxed insert in the report, entitled "The Guidelines of the Religious," Menahem Rahat adds: "The religious factions have also presented guidelines that they demand be included in the government guidelines. The discussion of these demands will resume on 9 June. Yesterday, the Likud agreed to include only one of the six clauses, which states that Law of Conversion will be amended to state that any conversion to Judaism done in Israel will be officially recognized only if approved by the Chief Rabbinate."]

Israel: Talks With Religious Bloc in 'Trouble'; Eytan Insists on Defense

TA0706062196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Incoming Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Likud Knesset Member [MK] Ari'el Sharon will next week meet for the first time since elections. The two will discuss Sharon's role in the new government. The meeting was agreed upon in a phone call initiated by Netanyahu. In recent days Sharon and Tzomet partner Refa'el Eytan have complained that Netanyahu has not been briefing them on political developments and on what their status will be in the new government.

In a related development, sources in Tzomet say that if Eytan does not receive the defense portfolio, he will not join the government. This is after the party received information that haredi [ultra-Orthodox] Jews prefer Ari'el Sharon as housing minister over Eytan.

National Religious Party leader Zvulun Hammer says it will not give up on its demand for some control over the Religious Affairs Ministry. He said the religious bloc has no intention to bring about religious coercion just to preserve the status quo.

[Writing on page 1 of Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 7 June, Sarah Honig adds: "The coalition negotiations ran into trouble yesterday over the demands of the religious parties, most notably on how to define the status quo on religious affairs. The sides adjourned last night without an agreement." "Likud sources said the party's negotiators were quite stunned by the demands of the three religious parties put to them."

[Honig further reports: "Sources close to Netanyahu continued to say that the coalition would be set up soon, and that the new government would be ready for its first vote of confidence when the new Knesset convenes on June 17."

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 7 June carries Nadav Shragay's report on page A3, adding: "The prime minister-elect is acting with potential coalition partners to round up support for passing the so-called Norwegian bill in the Knesset. If the proposal is adopted, MK's who receive ministerial appointments will resign from the Knesset, enabling candidates who follow them on their party's Knesset list to join the house."]

Israel: Preference Poll—Baraq Leads in Defense, Shohat in Treasury

TA0706110196 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 7 Jun 96 p 1

[Public opinion poll conducted by the Dahaf Institute under the management of Dr. Mina Tzemah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Question: Who do you think is most suitable for the post of defense minister? (The interviewees were not presented with a candidate list and answered without receiving any further instructions) [all figures given in percentage points]

Answers: Ehud Baraq — 27; Yitzhaq Mordekhay — 14; Ari'el Sharon — 10; Shim'on Peres — 7; Moshe Arens — 5; Refa'el Eytan — 3; Binyamin Netanyahu — 1; others — 1; do not know — 32.

Question: Who do you think is most suitable for the post of finance minister? (The interviewees were not presented with a candidate list and answered without receiving any further instructions)

Answers: Avraham Shohat — 24; Dan Meridor — 13; Ari'el Sharon — 7; Shim'on Peres — 3; Yitzhaq Moda'i — 2; others — 9; do not know — 42.

Question: Should a national unity government be established?

Answers: Yes — 54; no — 44; no reply — 2.

Question: Following the change of government, do you expect changes in the political process with the Palestinians?

Answers: it will slow down — 50; there will be no change — 24; it will accelerate — 12; it will be frozen — 11; no reply — 3.

The poll was conducted on 4 and 5 June among 508 respondents who constitute a representative sample of the adult Israeli population. Margin of error is 4 percent.

Israel: Netanyahu Adviser Stresses Commitment to Peace Process

TA0606125796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 0930 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Dore Gold, the prime minister elect's political adviser, has stressed that the Israeli Government, headed by Binyamin Netanyahu, will be committed to the peace process and the consolidation of bilateral relations with all the Arab states that maintain diplomatic relations with Israel. Moreover, the new government will seek to establish diplomatic relations with other Arab countries.

In an exclusive interview with our correspondent Sa'id Mu'addi, Dr. Gold said that negotiations between Israel and the Arab states should take place within the context of safeguarding the interests of both sides. He emphasized that the new government is determined to achieve peace in the region, bearing in mind that this will not be easy.

Dr. Gold added that Netanyahu's government does not oppose the convocation of a second Madrid conference with the aim of bolstering the peace process. He emphasized the importance of the enhancement and expansion of relations between Israel and Egypt, which plays a pivotal role in the peace process. He said that the peace treaty signed with Egypt constitutes the cornerstone of peace in the region.

Dr. Gold stated that the new government will review the agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority and then make its decisions.

Our correspondent reports that the prime minister elect's adviser held another telephone conversation yesterday with PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, in the wake of the tripartite summit in al-'Aqabah.

Israel: Religious Parties, Third Way Submit Demands to Likud

TA0606161896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The heads of the three religious parties have submitted to the Likud negotiating team a six-point proposal for the new government's policy guidelines. Among its demands: Setting the religious status quo at the level it was four years ago; making any expansions of the coalition requisite on the agreement of all partners; giving the Chief Rabbinate sole authority to approve conversions in Israel; and finding a solution for those population sectors which suffer from a housing shortage. Representatives from SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], the National Religious Party, and United Torah Jewry met today with the Likud team at the Knesset. [passage omitted]

The Third Way also has its list of conditions for joining the coalition. Third Way representatives met this afternoon with the Likud and presented six main demands. They said that any legislation on basic laws concerning religion must be subject to their agreement in advance. The Third Way is also demanding the right to a free vote on what it calls issues of conscience. They want the right to bring to a vote in the Knesset within three months bills strengthening the status of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. The Likud would not put off implementing the bills once they would become law. The Third Way repeated their demand for a joint Transportation and Tourism ministerial post. They say all their conditions on issues of religion and conscience have been coordinated with the immigrants party, Yisra'el Ba'aliya, headed by Natan Sharansky.

Israel: Netanyahu Said Planning U.S.-Style Prime Minister's Office

TA0706105696 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 7 Jun 96 p 5

[Report by Menahem Rahat and Nadav Ha'etzni]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu has apparently decided to adopt the American style not only in the way he was elected, but also in the way he will run the government.

A plan that has emerged recently is giving the Prime Minister's Office a central and unprecedented weight, compared to the status of this office in the past. To meet this end, Netanyahu and his aides wish to take command of several powerful agencies that so far were part of other ministries and given his ministry powers similar to those of the White House.

One of the first signs of the power Netanyahu wishes to concentrate in his office is the intention to move the Budget Department, currently a major component of the Finance Ministry, into the Prime Minister's Office. In practice, the Budget Department controls the activities of all government offices through referents, who are placed in every ministry and are in charge of preparing its budget and, thus, control its activities.

If this move is made, it would be following the Washington model where responsibility for the budgets is in the hands of the Office of Management and Budget which is directly subject to the President and allows the White House full control over government activities.

The U.S. model, in which most of the power is held by the President and a broad executive team, may be adopted in other matters as well.

For example, the plan is that the Prime Minister's Office will take hold of the Government Companies Authority from the Treasury; the Public Works Division and the Israel Land Administration from the Construction and Housing Ministry; the National Planning Administration from the Interior Ministry; and responsibility over the Broadcasting Authority, the Second Authority for Radio and Television, and the cable broadcasts.

Netanyahu also intends to make a sort of verbal contract with each of the ministers he will appoint. He intends to draw clear policy guidelines for each ministry and decide on executive guidelines with the designated minister.

Netanyahu also intends to have each designated minister announce the central task he has set for himself as an goal to be attained, and will examine whether it has been attained after a certain period of time. In doing so, Netanyahu is seeking to come even closer to the American presidential administration structure in which the elected leader controls the activities of the various ministries and the "keys" to the ministries are eventually held by the president, or the prime minister.

Sources from the Likud and other potential coalition partners have reacted with amazement upon hearing that Netanyahu intends to build himself a "White House in Jerusalem." At the same time, some politicians were willing to admit that the American system, under which the elected president holds broad powers, has been proven effective and should be adopted.

Israel: Ministers Spearheading Move To Hold Early Labor Elections

TA0606170296 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We go now to events in Labor where a lot has been happening, not all of it positive. There have been increasing calls within the party by those who think Shim'on Peres should step down. Ehud Baraq, Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, and Avraham Shohat have been working on a plan whereby elections to the party's leadership would be held within six months. Our correspondent Danielle Shani reports:

[Begin recording] [Shani] Timing — this is the name of the game in the elections to Labor's leadership, and Baraq's associates believe that the right time for him should be as soon as possible, so as not to give Hayim Ramon time to recover from the criticism about the failure of the election campaign and so as to enable Baraq to flaunt his relations with the religious sect to waste time.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I think that electing the party's chairman soon is of utmost importance which we can already see, with every second person vying for the leadership.

[Shani] Indeed, the number of Labor ministers who are thinking of vying for the first slot on the party's list in another four years has been growing in recent days. Efrayim Sne met today with the outgoing prime minister to officially inform him of his intentions on the issue. Ben-Eli'ezer and Shahal also leave all options open.

[Shahal] Personally, I don't even know what I will be doing in another two months.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] At this moment Minister Ben-Eli'ezer does not see himself engaging in any personal discussions.

[Shani] Those calling for bringing the elections to the party's leadership forward and only later choosing all its institutions have been joined by five new Labor Knesset members who call themselves the Alternative Group. Labor Secretary General Nisim Zvili warns against any surprise move.

[Zvili] If by shortening the process somebody is suggesting that Shim'on Peres should be removed, he is making a very serious mistake. This will not happen in Labor.

[Shani] A decision on the date of the internal elections is expected to be made in the coming month. Only then will an argument start about the method: Ramon wants open primaries, while Baraq wants secret primaries. [end recording]

Jordan: King Husayn Says Amman Not To Negotiate for Palestinians

JN0706080096 Amman Radio Jordan in English 0400 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His majesty the king has said the Palestinians have the right for self-determination, and it is the last thing for anyone to suggest that Jordan has the right to talk in their name.

The king told the NEW YORK INQUIRER [as heard] that Jordan has no desire to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians and does not have any intention to do so. He said the kingdom rejected such an idea following the 1967 war, although Jordan at that time was capable of regaining 95 percent of the Palestinian occupied lands.

The king said he was convinced that he has a duty to insure that there is no return from a permanent peace, because such peace is needed by coming generations.

The king called on all parties to give a chance to the Israeli Prime Minister-Elect Binyamin Netanyahu to show whether he would commit himself to the Oslo agreement. The king said he was convinced Mr. Netanyahu would fulfill his commitments and that Jordan was determined to achieve a just and permanent peace in the region. His majesty reiterated Jordan's commitment to the Jordanian-Israeli peace accord.

Jordan: King Husayn Interviewed on Israeli Plans, Saudis, Bahrain

NC0606190696 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Report from MBC correspondent in Amman Sa'd al-Silawi on 6 June; italicized passages recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian monarch, King Husayn, today said he has received assurances and promises from Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu that he will proceed with the peace process on all its tracks.

[Husayn] *What I understood from our telephone conversation immediately after he [Netanyahu] won the election and also from the envoy who visited us is that they are moving toward peace and that it is a process from which there is no going back. I understood that they will implement, adhere to, and build on everything that has been agreed on so far.*

In an exclusive interview with MBC conducted by MBC General Consultant 'Irfan Nizam-al-Din tonight, King Husayn praised the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He said great progress has taken place in bilateral relations.

[Husayn] *Saudi-Jordanian relations are stronger than ever. There is determination and a strong will on both sides, the brothers, the one family, to build these relations on strong bases and not give any side the opportunity to tamper with these ties either from near or far.*

The Jordanian monarch revealed that he received a message from the Bahraini amir containing important information about the latest conspiracy in which Iran is involved.

[Husayn] *There is a suggestion regarding this role, the Iranian role, and regarding the training of some of these people received in a fraternal Arab country.*

Jordan: King Rejects 'Attempts' To Deny 'Country's Achievements'

JN0606195496 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1732 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Speech by King Husayn of Jordan at a meeting of Army officers marking the graduation of a new batch of Royal War Academy officers at the Royal Court in Amman on 6 June—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. In fact I always hoped to visit this current class and its participants before the graduation because we have always been accustomed to meeting and talking on all matters frankly and clearly. In any case, and despite this I have always followed your news during this period and I am proud of your achievements. [passage omitted]

I believe that basically, if the Arab people have the opportunities which we were denied over the years; namely, become educated in science, settle down emotionally, and become creative and activate their latent potentialities, then they will realize a prosperous future. They are not afraid of peace. Peace perhaps is our means of arriving at the stage where we can realize balance between ourselves and others and bridge the gap that has continued to exist between us and them. Then the future will become promising. All indications are that we can be reassured that the result will be in the interest of this nation.

The issue is not that of individuals. It is a question of peoples, fate, and future. Democracy is the way. Democracy means cooperation by all through enlightenment, to draw up the course of action, to shoulder responsibilities. Thus, we will have the power to face dangers and challenges in all circumstances and reach our aims and aspirations, God willing.

We embarked on the path of peace after sisterly Egypt went first. We met in Madrid and provided an umbrella for the Palestinian side, our brothers and kinsfolk, to carry out their responsibilities and have their say concerning their future and fate on their national soil. Then they chose to have it their own way and realize what they have realized so far, on the path of attaining, God willing, their full rights on their national soil.

At that time, we realized that it was our duty to move. We did move and we regained our territory and rights to water, as far as the Jordanian-Israeli track was concerned. God willing, we are now on the threshold of a new breakthrough in every sense of the word, concerning the latent potentialities in this land, this people, and the opportunities which the new conditions will make available so that everyone will build and excel.

We hope that all that we have realized will be a part of an operation of comprehensive peace in the entire region. We categorically reject any attempt by any side—similar to attempts made throughout the history of this country—to deny this country's achievements, sincerity, Arabism, and genuine character. We reject any attempt at making this country a scapegoat for anybody trying to justify his inability to reach his aims by pointing figures at this country. This country and these people will always remain at the forefront. Our heads will always be high and will not bow except before Almighty God at all times and in all circumstances. This is our right.

We were told: Do not interfere in our affairs. Our brothers and kinsfolk wanted to shoulder direct responsibilities and to move. We embarked on the path of peace from the same point and from the same premise and we reached what we have reached, God be praised. We have recognized, firm international borders for the first time. All possible attempts by some to solve the [Palestinian] problem at the expense of this land, this county, and this people, have gone, never to return.

Our people deserve better than this because they have made many sacrifices. Their country is that of the immigrants [Palestinian refugees] and the supporters [Jordanian people]. They were at the forefront, defending their nation's rights and the Arabs' rights and thy will continue on this path.

God be praised. With your endeavors and work we will continue to build and make of our country a model, a good example for everyone. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Syria Reportedly Accusing Amman of Supporting Iraq

JN0606115396 Amman SHIHAN in Arabic
8-14 Jun 96 p 7

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab diplomatic sources disclosed to SHIHAN that Syria is working toward obstructing normalization of Jordanian-Gulf sources by adopting an anti-Jordan stands at the meetings of the Damascus Declaration states. Syria, the sources added, instigated Gulf states against Jordan by announcing at all these meetings that Jordan was one of the most important supporters of Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait and that Jordan still maintains good relations with the Iraqi regime.

The Arab diplomatic sources noted that Damascus continuously tells the Gulf states, particularly Kuwait, that Jordan is helping the Iraqi regime remain in power in Baghdad.

Jordan: Deputies React to Statements by Syria's Talas Against Amman

JN0606183196 Amman SHIHAN in Arabic
8-14 Jun 96 p 7

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The recent statements made by Lieutenant General Mustafa Talas, Syrian defense minister, drew angry reactions from Jordanians, including the deputies, who considered these statements as a blow to Arab unity. The statements were also described as destructive and irresponsible.

SHIHAN contacted a number of deputies who were infuriated by these statements which they unanimously denounced.

Deputy Fawzi Tu'aymah, head of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the House of Representatives, told SHIHAN: I believe it would be of no use to give any attention to this subject. When political stands become subject to whims, the principles and rules of dealing with others become lost. I remember that the person who made these statements [Talas] wrote a book about the Great Arab Revolt. My immediate reaction to these statements is that they are irresponsible, destructive, and detrimental to the higher Arab interests and good-neighborly relations. I understand that there are differences in viewpoints among Arab countries; however, these poisonous statements, which destroy our relations with each other, are disgusting and unacceptable to any Arab citizen who has a living conscience and a true pan-Arab feeling of belonging.

Deputy Ahmad al-Kasasibah's reaction was not different from Tu'aymah's. Al-Kasasibah told SHIHAN: I am very astonished at the the Syrian defense minister's statements. Jordan does not need recognition from Syria as it is internationally recognized. Jordan was the second Arab country after Egypt to gain independence. Talas's statements are not in line with the national interests of Syria or the Arab nation. These are suspect statements that seek to maximize differences. I defend the Jordanian state with its three components; namely, land, people, and system. I believe that the minister was not right to try to bring the name of Saudi Arabia into this affair, and imagine that there is dispute between Jordan and Egypt. I hope that he will not go back to that era when accusations were leveled through the mass media — the era of 'Ahmad Sa'id, when radio announcers used to call: O our brothers in the north, while others would call: O our people in the south. All Arab officials should now rise above differences and personal interests.

Deputy Fayyad Jarrar said: First of all, Jordan is a sovereign state that has recognized borders. The frenzy of the Syrian defense minister is not new to us. The entire world recognizes Jordan and the leader of its march. The leader of the homeland enjoys respect that is not given to any other Arab or non-Arab leader. If the Syrian defense minister has any ambitions, then this will not affect the march of our country, our national unity, or the rallying of our people behind their leadership. The statements show the short-sightedness of the Syrian defense minister.

Deputy Khalil Haddadin said: If Syria claims that Jordan is not a state, then, based on the same yardstick, Syria is not a state. Jordan and Syria are the product of Sykes-Picot agreement, which sought to fabricate borders among Arab countries and thus trigger disputes. What goes for Jordan also applies to Syria. Amid the current conditions, it is necessary to reach an Arab agreement that prevents Arab governments from slandering each other. The Arab governments should now seek to lift the blockade against Libya and Iraq. I think that the status of Jordan's foreign policy is incorrect. There should be a drastic change in this policy.

Jordan: 'Large Quantities of Weapons' Coming From Syria Seized

JN0606114996 Amman SHIHAN in Arabic
8-14 Jun 96 p 7

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed security sources said that Syria was turning a blind eye to large shipments of drugs coming into Jordan from Lebanon via Syria. The sources added that these shipments easily crossed the borders, but were discovered by Jordanian authorities immediately after they began to search the trucks and cars used to transport the drugs.

The sources said that security personnel have managed to seize large quantities of weapons coming from Syria and Lebanon to some organizations and sides operating in Jordan.

Jordan: Country 'No Longer Suitable' for Iraqi Oppositionists

MM0606150396 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI
in Arabic 6 Jun 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Jordan Withdraws Protection From al-Samarra'i, Induces al-Khazraji To Leave for Saudi Arabia"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — The Jordanian Government has recently taken a series of measures against the Iraqi opposition parties and figures present on Jordanian territory, in line with Jordan's current initiative designed to rectify its relations with Iraq. Iraqi opposition sources have told AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI that there are indications that the Jordanian scene is no longer suitable for opposition activities against the Saddam Husayn regime due to Jordan's trade and economic calculations with the Iraqi regime.

In this context AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI has learned that the Jordanian Government has recently withdrawn its support for Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former chief of Iraqi [military] intelligence, and his felow oppositionist Gen. Nizar al-Khazraji, urging them not to receive guests in Amman or to expand their activities and contacts on Jordanian territory at this stage.

The former decided last March to reside in Amman instead of Damascus, while the latter defected to Jordan, where he was received by the opposition Accord Movement in Amman after his escape from Iraq via Turkey. The available information says that Maj. Gen. al-Samarra'i has told the Jordanian Government that he is no longer prepared to reside in Amman due to the lack of a clear Jordanian political program designed to topple the Iraqi regime. And it seems that Gen. al-Khazraji has left Amman for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the same reason. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Heads of Security, Intelligence Promoted

JN0706105096 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
7 Jun 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman-PETRA — A royal decree was issued promoting Major General Nasuh Muhyi-al-Din Marzuqah, director of the Public Security Department, and Major General Samih Badr-al-Din al-Battikhi, director of the General Intelligence Department, to the rank of Lieutenant General effective 6 June 1996.

Lebanon: 'Big Explosion' Said To Target Israeli Patrol; 7 Casualties

NC0606112896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
1030 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israeli forces today raked the outskirts of the villages of Haddatha and Rshaf, causing several fires between the two villages and between Majdal Silm and Tallusah.

Enemy forces this morning bombarded the areas of Sujud, al-Luwayzah, al-Litani river basin, al-Wadi al-Akhdar, al-Jabal al-Rafi', al-Tasash stream area, and the outskirts of Bra'shit.

Security sources report that a big explosion this morning targeted an Israeli mechanized and foot patrol on the al-'Udaysah- Rabb al-Thalathin road. These sources say that seven of the personnel were wounded, three seriously. Enemy helicopters evacuated them to the border strip. [passage omitted]

Israeli gunboats fired at three lebanese fishing boats off al-Qulaylah-al-Mansuri coast south of Tyre this morning, damaging fishing nets. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Fadlallah Criticizes Bahrain Over Iran Allegations

LD0606214996 Tehran IRNA in English
2115 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, June 6, IRNA — Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah severely criticised the scandalous claims of Bahraini government that the Islamic Republic of Iran had been involvement in the unrest which has been prevalent in Bahrain during the past eighteen months. The allamah stated that the claims have been based on the CIA directions and instructions due to the sensitive conditions in the region.

The great Lebanese cleric pointed out that the claim that Iran is involved in the plot to overthrow the Bahraini government is too funny to be taken seriously. The allamah stressed that whenever there was a visit by one of top officials from the United States and its allies in the region, they tried to stir up the situation and incite the rulers in the Persian Gulf states getting into big arms deals.

Allamah Fadlallah ended by saying that the United States, United Kingdom and their allies try to present Iran as the enemy of the nations in the Persian Gulf in order to make big arms sales.

Syria: Al-Asad Tells French Figure Peace Possible With Netanyahu

TA0606151396 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad told a senior French figure with whom he met in Damascus in recent days that he believes a peace arrangement could be reached with Israel under Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu's leadership. Our correspondent in Paris Eldar Beck learned about these remarks, and here is his report:

[Begin Beck recording] The pessimistic statements concerning the fate of the peace process President al-Asad and his associates have been making since Netanyahu's election as prime minister totally contradict the contents of a talk al-Asad had only a few days ago with a French figure who is very versed in the affairs of the Middle East. The Syrian president affirmed to his French interlocutor that he believes a peace arrangement could be attained with the next Israeli Government, and stressed that the negotiations would continue to be held through U.S. mediation. The Syrian president did not detail the future parameters of the arrangement, but pointed out that it would include not only the Golan but also Lebanon.

Al-Asad did not conceal his intention to totally separate progress on the Syrian negotiating track from progress on the Palestinian track. Moreover, some of his remarks did not conflict with Netanyahu's idea of granting autonomy to the Palestinians in the permanent arrangement — autonomy, not a state.

According to a French diplomatic source in Damascus, there already exists an indirect channel of communication between Netanyahu and the top echelon of the Syrian Government which has been active for some months and has been used to relay messages. [end recording]

Syria: Radio Urges Joint Arab Action To Face Netanyahu 'Ambitions'

JN0606191396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1136 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Any Arab move on the road to reinforcing solidarity and bolstering bridges of understanding among the Arabs is, in fact, a sign of progress on the right track that directs the nation's efforts toward confronting the dangers threatening it. In light of this, the Syrian Arab move acquires maximum importance, especially at this decisive stage of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There is no doubt that the importance of the invitation extended by President Hafiz al-Asad to King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia, custodian of the two holy mosques, and President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of Egypt lies not only in the fact that it is an invitation to a high-level meeting, but also in the results this meeting will yield in order to confront the clear change in the region's basic issues, which render such a meeting inevitable — which is what President Hafiz al-Asad said during the joint news conference he held with President Mubarak in Cairo. He said: We have to intensify efforts, exchange views and advice, and intensively support each other, because the issue of any of us and any of our brothers concerns us all. This is also because the policies and problems of this age, especially in our region, are not normal problems that involve only narrow areas. These problems are multifaceted and have many possibilities that deal with the most fateful issues. This requires that we keep in constant touch with each other. We should mobilize ourselves and, as the president said: We should not be forgetful nor taken unawares so that we can address our issues in a way that meets the needs of our people and nation.

From this premise, and to confront this change in the region's basic issues, joint Arab action should be stronger than any differences in viewpoints and thus, it should be the most decisive factor. Therefore, in view of what is looming on the horizon in terms of an intransigent Israeli policy, and the ambitions that were sensed in Binyamin Netanyahu's statements, there is no alternative to a general Arab awakening and a consolidation of stands and efforts. This requires a stand that is capable of dealing with events out of awareness of this stage and its dangers, and in a way that serves the region's issues and confronts the great challenges that exist with a stand that is up to the level of pan-Arab responsibility.

Syria: Papers Preview Damascus Summit

JN0706110696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 7 Jun 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial entitled "Damascus Summit and Arab Mobilization," AL-BA'TH says: Following the Cairo summit between Presidents al-Asad and Mubarak, another summit will be held today in Damascus at the invitation of Arab leader Hafiz al-Asad. This tripartite summit will include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria and will embody the pillar of an Arab meeting, which the nation needs very badly in view of the developments that we have always taken into account.

AL-BA'TH says: Three days ago in Cairo, leader al-Asad made a call for Arab mobilization to keep us alert and not be deceived by others. The threats to our nation, as well as future threats, which will be even more serious, require genuine mobilization to face the daily growing challenges.

AL-BA'TH says: Leader al-Asad's call for Arab mobilization does not mean beating the drums of war or a blow to the peace process and its desired objectives. It is a call to motivate the Arab spirit and to arrive at a state of resurgence that will help unify ranks and positions in the confrontation against our nation which is the result of several factors that left many wounds in the Arab body. What Israel gained for free in the past few years, mainly the opening of the doors of hegemony, was the most prominent of these factors, which at the same time paved the way for more Israeli infiltration into the Arab ranks.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: Syria's considerations in the peace process are not based, and will never be based on personal interests. They are primarily based on our nation's supreme interests. The abandonment of any part of these interests affects the Arab presence as a whole.

On the same subject, AL-THAWRAH says in a commentary: In terms of timing, the subjects they discussed and will discuss in detail, and their effect on the future of joint Arab action, the general conditions in the region, and the peace process, the Damascus tripartite summit, grouping President Hafiz al-Asad, Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, and his Majesty King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia, which will convene today is, like the Cairo summit, a pan-Arab action that stimulates the nation's energies and resources to confront both present and future threats.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Things are not proceeding in a positive way. President Hafiz al-Asad stressed a few days ago that the problems we face in our region now are different from problems in the past. These problems are not limited to certain areas only, but cover several areas, including the [Arab] existence. There is also a change in the basic subjects in the region. This fact dictates that we should be alert; mobilize our energies; exchange ideas, advice, and support; and address our issues in a way that meets the needs of our people and nation.

The paper says: Putting the Arab house in order and fortifying the pan-Arab arena is a very important issue and a dire and pressing need, dictated by the Israeli aggressiveness that still uses the strategy of dealing with each party separately and taking advantage of the state of division and fragmentation to make more headway and strengthen the position of Tel Aviv. Israel also seeks to impose its conditions, terms, and hegemony and to entrench its usurpation of Arab rights away from the terms of reference of the just and comprehensive peace. Israel also evades the requirements of that peace. Syria has always shouldered, and continues to shoulder this mission, out of its belief in the unity of this nation.

AL-THAWRAH says: Syria does not gamble. It does not take risks or bargain over a grain of the homeland's soil or its rights. It is not interested in who is now governing, or will govern in Israel. The return of the entire territory in the Golan Heights, south Lebanon, and the other occupied Arab territories and the implementation of the pertinent UN Security Council Resolutions are not subject to discussion.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: The current conditions in the region require that we should be very vigilant and very serious about fulfilling the supposed pan-Arab action. The correct position is to adhere to the national and pan-Arab principles, not to abandon a grain of Arab soil or any Arab right, and work on achieving peace with its well-known principles: Israel's withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines and the establishment of the equal and balanced [mutawazinah] security measures on both sides to ensure security.

AL-THAWRAH says: With Netanyahu coming to power, the Israelis began to speak again of partial withdrawal from the Golan Heights, withdrawal in stages, and withdrawal from certain areas. They also began to emphasize again the building of settlements in the occupied territories. All of these things contradict the spirit and principles of peace, according to which the Madrid Conference was convened. This demonstrates that they reject the desired genuine peace.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: 4-Party Alliance Suspends Hekmatyar

BK0706093696 Hong Kong AFP in English 0921 GMT 7 Jun 96

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"Hekmatyar's membership has been suspended after his decision to enter into an alliance" with Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, they said.

"Hekmatyar can remain either in the government or in the opposition, but he cannot be a member of both," an SCC official said.

The decision was taken after a series of meetings between SCC chief Sebghatollah Mojaddedi and alliance leaders earlier this week in Afghanistan, they said.

SCC partners include Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami, Mojaddedi's National Liberation Front, Shiite leader Karim Khalili's Hezb-e Wahdat and the National Movement of General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam.

But the SCC official, who did not want to be named, said that the SCC, an anti-Rabbani alliance formed two years ago, had not formally expelled Hekmatyar as he had not yet assumed the office of prime minister as promised under last month's deal with Rabbani.

Under the accord, signed on May 24 almost 10 days after hundreds of Hezb-e Eslami fighters reached Kabul, the two former foes would jointly defend the country.

Sources in Kabul said the Hezb-e Eslami would also be given the finance and defence ministries in the new government in an attempt to broaden the base of support of the Rabbani government, whose tenure expired in December 1994.

Other Afghan sources said the SCC might expell Hezb-e Eslami when Hekmatyar becomes prime minister.

Hekmatyar resigned as prime minister and joined Dostam, who controls several provinces in northern Afghanistan, when the warlord staged an abortive coup in January 1994.

The SCC officials rejected as "baseless" the official Hezb-e Eslami claim that the Council had allowed the party chief to hold peace talks with the Rabbani administration.

Afghanistan: Resolution Calls For 'Immediate Resignation' of Rabbani

BK0606140296 Hong Kong AFP in English 1353 GMT 6 Jun 96

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A resolution adopted in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar blamed Rabbani for the current conflict and bloodshed in Afghanistan, he said.

"Rabbani must immediately step down," the resolution said, Taleban leader Amir Khan Muttaqi told AFP by telephone. The leaders awaiting response from Rabbani have so far not set a deadline for his departure, he said.

The meeting convened by Taleban was attended by Yunus Khales, chief of his faction of Hezb-e Eslami, Mohammed Nabe Mohammede of Harakat-e Enqelab-e Eslami, and Seyyed Ahmad Gilani of National Islamic Front of Afghanistan. A spiritual leader from Kabul, Seyyed Ahmad Khan Mujaddei, also attended the meeting, Muttaqi said.

The meeting on Taleban initiative followed a political and military accord signed by President Rabbani and his former arch rival Golboddin Hekmatyar on May 24. Kabul officials said it was aimed at forming a broadbased government and to end the four year civil war. It also binds the two parties to jointly defend Kabul and other Afghan territories against enemy forces.

Observers said it might have been designed to flush out the Taleban who after capturing half of Afghanistan have been besieging Kabul for the past eight months.

Some Afghan sources believed the Taleban move to invite other opposition leaders could be an attempt to forge an understanding with Rabbani rivals in anticipation of a possible assault from Hekmatyar and Rabbani forces on their positions.

He said Afghan leaders will continue discussion on future cooperation in the Taleban base of Kandahar. They will address a big public gathering in the city's main mosque late Thursday, he said.

The militia which sprang from Afghan Islamic schools, has pledged to topple Rabbani whose term expired two years ago, and enforce Islamic law across the country. The leaders agreed that the current Afghan rulers were not sincere in enforcing Islamic law, Muttaqi said. They supported the "belief" that only Taleban were capable of fulfilling the aspirations of the Afghan people, he added.

Afghanistan

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1353 GMT 6 Jun 96

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Afghanistan

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On Pakistan's Alleged Help to Taleban

We have seen no decrease in Pakistan's support and the delivery of arms and ammunition has continued. On Saturday (May 18) a large amount of money was given to the Taleban and Dostam by Pakistan. The plane that carried money to Dostam flew over Ghazni and Dostam's brother was a passenger in the plane. The first step Pakistan should take is to stop help to opposition groups . This would be positive if it is implemented. I believe that Pakistan should change their strategy of the past four years. They should reverse it.

My Problems With Pakistan

It goes back to the years of the Jehad. During the Jehad Pakistan wanted a puppet regime in Kabul that would take orders from them. Pakistan wanted at that time a weak, dependent regime in Kabul and they counted on Hekmatyar. The assistance given to Hekmatyar during the Jehad was very different from that given to other parties. Secondly Pakistan always believed that the collapse of the Kabul regime would come from the southern front. They have always been wrong. Before the withdrawal of the Soviet troops the ISI [Inter Services Intelligence] invited me to meet them. (1989). I told them to come and see me. We agreed to met in Badakhshan and there I met with Brigadier Janjua. Janjua explained how they have planned to bring down Najibullah in a few days and in the plan for capturing Kabul they had trained special groups to control law and order in the city after capturing it. He requested me not to interfere in Kabul and he insisted that I not move on Kabul. My answer was that we are fighting for our country and I told him that his plan would not work. I said the strength of the forces he had shown in his plan by the various parties is not the real position. I said it is just the imagination of these parties who want more money from you. He continued to insist I not interfere in Kabul and it was clear why because they wanted Hekmatyar. Pakistan never believed that the forces of the north (Tajiks and Uzbeks) could take Kabul. That has always been the crux of Pakistan's problem with us and why they have created so many problems for us. They always wanted Kabul taken from the south (Pakhtuns).

The second problem during the Jehad was that the ISI always had very wrong intelligence. It never knew what we were doing in the north. I was always surprised how uninformed ISI was about the north. Many journalists covering the Jehad were better informed of the ground realities in Afghanistan.

Then I met the ISI chief General Durrani (1991). He told me they had a plan to capture Kabul and that everyone had approved this plan. When I saw the plan I was surprised how uninformed the ISI was. Most of their information was based on what Hezb-e Eslami had told them and it was false information. Based on wrong intelligence the ISI had made an unintelligent plan. It was unrealistic and when I explained to them the real conditions. the winter, the strength of Mojahedin Durrani's last plea was that the army chief General Mirza Aslam Beg had approved the plan and only he could change it. Although I had not planned to go to Islamabad I went there to meet Beg and discuss the plan. I found him a sound person.

He realised the mistakes they had made in the plan so he decided to abandon this plan. Nevertheless when Najibullah fell (April 1992) due to the offensive by the forces of the north Pakistan was surprised. The Pakistanis were taken completely by surprise. That's why their policies have failed one after another.

On the Destiny of Pakistan and Afghanistan

The interests of the Pakistani people and the Afghans was sacrificed by wrong policies during the Jehad when the people of Pakistan helped the Jehad. Most Afghans consider Pakistan as their second country and all Afghans have good memories of Pakistan. The whole Afghan nation was satisfied by the help provided by Pakistan during the Jehad. Pakistan's politicians should have used this relationship in a more clever way. I believe if Pakistan had sound policies after the collapse of the Soviet Union the two countries would have been the most important in the region and in regional politics Pakistan and Afghanistan would have had the last word. But Pakistan missed this opportunity. So the destiny of the two nations was given to a few people in the intelligence services who fed their governments and their people with wrong information and created a lot of problem's between two nations which had fought together for 14 years. Ask any ordinary Afghan what he thinks and he will tell you the same.

On Bringing Peace Between Pakistan and Afghanistan

The initiative must come from Pakistan. What is going is neither to the benefit of Pakistan or our own people. We believe we should leave this wrong path that has come between us. And the policy played out during the past four years has not benefited us or Pakistan.

This atmosphere should change. In our past meetings with the Pakistanis we talked to them frankly and said the policies should change but the same policies have continued. I am personally disappointed because I don't see a power center in Pakistan to make this decision to change policy. When Benazir Bhutto was coming to

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Afghanistan: Ra
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Afghanistan: Rabbani Aide—Shiite Leader Invited To Share Power

BK0606145996 Hong Kong AFP in English
1443 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, June 6 (AFP) — Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani in a bid to broaden his base of his government, has invited a pro-Iranian Shiite faction Hezb-e Wahdat to share power with his administration, presidential spokesman Aziz Murad said Thursday.

"We are prepared to accept their reasonable terms and demands," if they accept the offer, Murad told AFP.

He said acting Defence Minister, Yunus Qanuni, flew to Wahdat chief Karim Khalili's stronghold of Bamian Saturday to convey the invitation.

The atmosphere of talks was good, Murad said adding that Khalili appeared interested in a negotiated solution to the problem. However, independent sources said the two sides traded allegations of breaking the promises in the past. Khalili blamed the Kabul government was supporting Mohammad Akbari, leader of a rival Wahdat faction, to disarm his men. On the other hand Qanuni alleged that Khalili tried to harm Rabbani's influence in central Afghanistan, the sources said.

Khalili has held several rounds of talks both with the Afghan government and the students led Taleban militia.

'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister of Iran who was instrumental in the May 24 signing of a peace accord between Rabbani and former premier Golboddin Hekmatyar, is also engaged in a reconciliation between Khalili and Rabbani.

However, observers said Khalili, a close ally of General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, chief of the northern Uzbek militia, was unlikely to accept the offer without a green light from Dostam.

Borujerdi who arrived in Kabul Monday to broker peace said he visited northern Mazar-e Sharif for talks with Dostam who supported a peaceful settlement of the Afghan imbroglio.

Meanwhile a United Nations food convoy arrived in Kabul Thursday.

The convoy was the first since December 1993 to cross the northern Salang Pass enroute from Mazar-e Sahrif.

UN Sources said the World Food Programme (WFP) convoy of nine trucks, brought 95 tones of pulses and 23 tons of sugar and other humanitarian supplies for the war-weary inhabitants of Kabul.

They said the Kabul government as well as General Dostam had agreed to the opening of the road for humanitarian traffic. Their forces cooperated in providing safe access to vehicles and WFP personnel, they said.

Afghanistan: Rabbani Meets With Shiites, Urges National Solidarity

LD0606163696 Tehran IRNA in English
1559 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, June 6, IRNA — Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, on Thursday, pleaded with all the people, jihad groupings and parties, as well as tribes and followers of every religious faction to join forces and defend the independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan with a national solidarity.

Afghanistan is the common home to all the people of the country with different ethnic and religious characters and various political groupings and all of them should participate in efforts for preserving the eminent Islamic values and the total achievement of mojahedin, said the president in a meeting with a group of Shiite Muslims in Kabul.

The pride of historical resistance belongs to every stratum of people in Afghanistan and the victory over the Red Army and establishment of the Islamic government in this country was due to their union and common action, he noted.

In his speech, Rabbani invited all the parties defending the independence, the national union and the territorial integrity of Afghanistan, to peacefully resolve their disputes and put up a heroic defence against foreign plots and meddlings in a united front. The president also pointed out that his government does all it can to consolidate union and friendship among all the ethnic and political groups as well as followers of religious sects in Afghanistan, and would spare no efforts for establishment of peace and Islamic brotherhood in the country.

Afghanistan: Iran's Borujerdi Meets Party Leaders

LD0606180996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In pursuing his visits and meetings with Afghan jihad leaders, 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister for Asia and Pacific affairs, on Wednesday met 'Abdol Karim Khalili, leader of the Islamic Unity Party [Wahdat-e Eslami—Shiite group] council in Bamian and discussed the latest developments in Afghanistan with him.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: 4-Party Alliance Suspends Hekmatyar

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"Rabbani must immediately step down," the resolution said, Taleban leader Amir Khan Muttaqi told AFP by telephone. The leaders awaiting response from Rabbani have so far not set a deadline for his departure, he said.

The meeting convened by Taleban was attended by Yunus Khales, chief of his faction of Hezb-e Eslami, Mohammed Nabe Mohammede of Harakat-e Enqelab-e Eslami, and Seyyed Ahmad Gilani of National Islamic Front of Afghanistan. A spiritual leader from Kabul, Seyyed Ahmad Khan Mujaddei, also attended the meeting, Muttaqi said.

The meeting on Taleban initiative followed a political and military accord signed by President Rabbani and his former arch rival Golboddin Hekmatyar on May 24. Kabul officials said it was aimed at forming a broadbased government and to end the four year civil war. It also binds the two parties to jointly defend Kabul and other Afghan territories against enemy forces.

Observers said it might have been designed to flush out the Taleban who after capturing half of Afghanistan have been besieging Kabul for the past eight months.

Some Afghan sources believed the Taleban move to invite other opposition leaders could be an attempt to forge an understanding with Rabbani rivals in anticipation of a possible assault from Hekmatyar and Rabbani forces on their positions.

He said Afghan leaders will continue discussion on future cooperation in the Taleban base of Kandahar. They will address a big public gathering in the city's main mosque late Thursday, he said.

The militia which sprang from Afghan Islamic schools, has pledged to topple Rabbani whose term expired two years ago, and enforce Islamic law across the country. The leaders agreed that the current Afghan rulers were not sincere in enforcing Islamic law, Muttaqi said. They supported the "belief" that only Taleban were capable of fulfilling the aspirations of the Afghan people, he added.

power there were hopes for a change but we have had very bad experiences with her.

On Help From India and Russia

This is all a creation by Pakistan and the ISI in order to justify what they have done and to provoke public opinion against us in Pakistan. We are receiving no military help and Pakistan does not have a shred of evidence.

I met General Iftikhar (former ISI Deputy DG [Director General]) in Kabul last year. He said there were Indian technicians in Bagram (air base). I explained every thing to him. At the end of the meeting he said now he had no worries about Indian involvement and he was convinced about it. But when he returned to Pakistan the propaganda against us increased. Also how can anyone believe that the Russians can help us.

When the Taleban forced down a Russian plane in Kandhar full of arms, we had purchased them from Albania and hired a plane to bring them. Every day we have clashes on the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border involving Russian troops. How can Russia be helping us.

On Regional Stability

I am optimistic about the region. If there is stability in Afghanistan it would effect the entire region. A sound policy by Pakistan would bring greater stability to Pakistan also. But God forbid if Afghanistan slips further into instability, then the whole region will be drowned in instability including Pakistan. But look at the Taleban. One day they will say why not implement our kind of Sharia in Pakistan. On that day General (Nasirullah) Babar will come to his senses and then let's see if he can save the situation. Look at the problems the Arabs caused when they came to fight in Afghanistan. They went back home and created huge problems for their own countries. So what about the Taleban who will return one day back to Pakistan with their arms. Remember Mohammed Iqbal's poem. He wrote "Afghanistan is the heart of Asia and if it is stable then Asia will be stable."

On why he does not take up an official post in the government. There is an old Persian saying: When everyone is looking for a chair to sit on it is better to sit on the floor.

India

India: UF Releases Guiding Agenda—Common Minimum Program

BK0706023296 Madras THE HINDU in English 6 Jun 96 p 7

["Text" of the common minimum program of the United Front government released by Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda in Delhi on 5 June]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

The Background

The United Front has been formed at a crucial moment in our nation's history. The 1996 Lok Sabha elections have given a decisive mandate in favour of secular and democratic forces. Three out of four voters have voted against sectarian and communal parties. At the same time, we recognise that these three out of four voters have voted for a number of parties including national and State-level parties. These voters have also voted for a Government which is guided by the principles of probity, responsibility with accountability and openness and transparency in all decision-making. We, therefore, interpret the verdict as a mandate for the formation of a secular, liberal and democratic coalition Government at the Centre. It is only such a Government that can reflect the pluralistic nature of our society.

The United Front represents the diversity of India in substantial measure. We pledge to represent the resolve of the Indian people to preserve the secular nature of their heritage. We pledge to represent the resolve of the Indian people to give themselves a Government that is representative, responsible and responsive. We pledge to represent the will of the Indian people to strengthen the forces of political federalism which, in the Indian context, means a strong Centre, strong States and viable local bodies. We pledge to represent the desire of the Indian people to give themselves a higher standard of living and a better quality of life through faster economic growth and enhanced social justice.

The United Front Government will not be a replacement of one set of rulers by another. It will mark the beginning of an alternative model of governance based on federalism, decentralisation, accountability, equality and social justice, economic and political reforms, respect for human freedoms and openness and transparency which will ensure the dignity of both the nation and the individual citizen.

The United Front presents below an agenda for a Central Government founded on the pillars of unity, secularism, stability, development and distributive justice.

Stability and Federalism

The United Front is committed to giving a stable Government at the Centre for the full term of five years. In any coalition, there will be differences, but what is important is the manner in which these differences are aired, discussed and resolved. During its term of office, the United Front Government will advance the principles of political, administrative and economic federalism. In each of these spheres, powers will be devolved and authority will be decentralised. The last review of Centre-State relations was undertaken by the Sarkaria Commission which gave its report over 10 years ago. Since then, there has been a sea-change in both the politics and economics of the country. There has also been a new articulation of States rights and the need for greater powers to the States to meet the aspirations of their respective States.

Hence, the United Front Government intends to pursue a two-track policy. On the first track, the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, on which there is already a broad consensus, will be implemented through legislation and administrative action as appropriate. The United Front believes that it is possible to take immediate action, legislative and/or administrative, on the following matters:

To give greater autonomy to States in determining their priorities in developmental programmes;

To give States greater freedom to draw their State plans within the broad framework of the National Five Year Plans;

To transfer most Centrally-sponsored schemes to the control of the State Governments;

To grant assent promptly to Bills passed by the Legislatures on matters which are within the legislative powers of the State Legislatures.

On the second track, the United Front Government will immediately appoint a high-level committee to review and update the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission. The committee will be requested to also look into the vital question of devolution of financial powers from the Central Government to the State Governments. The committee will be required to give its report within three months. The report of the committee will then be made public so that there is an informed public debate before final decisions are taken. The United Front Government will reactivate and energise institutions like the National Development Council and the Inter-State Council.

The scope of Article 356 of the Constitution has been interpreted and circumscribed by recent decisions of the Supreme Court. Article 356 will be amended to reflect these decisions and to prevent the misuse of that Article.

Elections have been held in most States to Panchayats [village councils] and, in some cases, also to the Nagarpalikas [metropolitan councils] pursuant to the 72nd and 73rd Amendments to the Constitution. The process will be taken further to ensure devolution of administrative and financial powers to Panchayats and Nagarpalikas in all the States. Steps will be taken to ensure that regular elections are held according to the prescribed frequency.

Social Justice

The United Front is committed to the empowerment of the underprivileged and deprived sections and communities. One-third of the elected membership in Parliament and State Legislatures will be reserved for women. Legislation, including an amendment to the Constitution, if necessary, will be introduced to reserve one-third of all posts in Government for women. The United Front Government will take all possible measures to promote and ensure gender equality. All laws will be reviewed to remove provisions which discriminate against women.

The policy of reservation in public employment for Scheduled Castes [SC's], Scheduled Tribes [ST's] and Other Backward Classes will continue and will be implemented vigorously. The benefits of reservation will be extended to dalit Christians [low-caste converts]. Special courts will be set up under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act to ensure quick justice to victims of atrocities.

Artisans, crafts persons, trades persons, weavers and fishermen are among the most neglected sections of society. Special programmes will be devised to enhance their skills, give them modern tools and more credit facilities and make their products and services more marketable so that they will earn living wages.

The United Front Government will urge the State Governments to take up on a priority basis, the question of conferring ownership rights on slum dwellers in respect of the land on which they live with suitable provisions for slum improvement, public or private group housing to replace kutcha shelters [slums] and allotment of alternative sites in case it becomes necessary to relocate slum dwellers on grounds of public interest.

Empowerment of SCs, STs

Scheduled Tribes are found in many parts of India and dwell in the most difficult and inhospitable terrains. There is growing disaffection among Scheduled Tribes because of lack of security, alienation of their lands, exploitation of the mineral wealth, deprivation of their rights to forest produce and wealth and despoiling of their environment. The United Front Government will appoint a high-level commission to enquire into and report on the status, problems and aspirations of the members belonging to the Scheduled Tribes. The United Front Government will also study the conclusions contained in the report of the Bhuria Committee on Scheduled Tribes made in 1995 and take necessary steps to implement the salient recommendations.

The United Front Government will urge the State Governments to make legislation for conferring ownership rights in respect of minor forest produce, including Tendu Patta [cigar leaves] on Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and other weaker sections who work in the forests. The Central Government will consider extending some financial assistance to the State Governments which take up this responsibility.

A large number of members belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes are dependent on their traditional occupations. On the one hand, the door of access to other occupations has been barred to them while, on the other hand, there is sharp dwindling of opportunities and incomes in their traditional occupations. Despite the policy of reservation, there is no true equality of opportunity. The Central Government and the State Governments have not addressed themselves comprehensively and consistently to measures which would bring economic freedom, educational equality and true equality of opportunities to these people. The United Front Government will carefully study the Dalit [scheduled castes] Manifesto formulated by the National Action Forum For Social Justice and implement its salient recommendations.

A number of cases are pending consideration for inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes. Decisions will taken on these cases expeditiously.

Secularism

United Front is founded on the plank of secularism and democracy. The United Front declares that secularism means that there should be separation of State and religion and also notes that it is that definition that has been accepted as correct by the Supreme Court in numerous decisions. Attempts by sectarian or communal forces to erode the multiethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic character of our society will be strongly resisted.

The contentious issue of Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi [temple/mosque issue] will be referred to the Supreme Court under Article 138 (2) of the Constitution. Stringent steps will be taken to implement the Protection of Places of Worship Act.

The Constitutional rights to freedom of religion contained in Article 25, 26, 27 and 28 of the Constitution will be respected and protected. At the same time, the United Front Government will not allow obscurantism and fundamentalism from any source and of any sort. The personal codes of different religious communities will not be altered unless and until a consensus has emerged in the religious community concerned for bringing about a change. Untiring efforts will be made to bring every section of the society together to build a strong modern, forward-looking, liberal and democratic society imbued with a scientific temper and an aspiration for material progress.

The United Front Government will review and, if necessary, change the 15-point programme for the minorities and ensure the implementation of the programme. Special emphasis will be placed on finding solutions to the problems of the minorities in relation to education, employment and opportunities for economic betterment.

Toward a Just and Humane Society

The United Front Government will, in close cooperation with State Governments, take steps to build a just and humane society. The right to free and compulsory elementary education shall be made a fundamental right and enforced through suitable statutory measures. Special programmes will also be launched to take care of children and the disabled and to eradicate child labour in all occupations and industries.

The Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and all other penal laws will be reviewed and amended to make their provisions consistent with the sanctity of human rights. The United Nations Convention on Torture will be adopted. State Governments will be required to appoint Human Rights Commissions.

Economic Policies

Growth with social justice will be the motto of the United Front Government. There is no substitute for growth. It is growth which creates jobs and generates incomes. Self-reliance has been an article of faith since Independence and the United Front Government will adopt such growth-oriented policies that lead to greater self-reliance. The United Front is committed to faster economic growth. The country's GDP needs to grow at over seven percent per year in the next 10 years in order to abolish endemic poverty and unemployment. The Ninth Five Year Plan is scheduled to be launched on April 1, 1997. The United Front Government will, within six months, bring out a detailed document that will articulate the priorities and programmes of the Ninth Plan.

Agriculture

The agriculture sector cries out for reforms. No strategy of economic reforms and regeneration in India can succeed without sustained and broad based agricultural development. The rate of investment in agriculture will be stepped up. All controls and regulations that are in the way of increasing the incomes of farmers will be reviewed immediately and abolished wherever found unnecessary. Controls on the movement of agricultural products and on the processing of agricultural products will be abolished. Measures will be taken to ensure that farmers receive fair and remunerative prices for their produce. Special attention will be devoted to augmenting rural infrastructure. A special plan for infrastructure development will be taken up in the 100 most backward and poorest districts of the country. The rural credit system will be restructured so as to double the flow of credit to agriculture and agro-industries, particularly to small and marginal farmers, within five years. A national policy on water sharing and water management will be devised to save farmers all over the country from recurrent floods and droughts.

Agencies that supply inputs to farmers will be professionalised and where found feasible converted into farmer-owned cooperatives. Agricultural research and extension organisations will be thoroughly overhauled. The most modern technology will be brought to the farm sector, e.g. bio-technology for livestock and cold storage for agro-processing.

A comprehensive law will be made by Parliament in respect of agricultural workers to guarantee them minimum wages and fair conditions of work, group insurance and other rights.

States will be encouraged to implement land reforms by plugging the legal and administrative loopholes. States will also be urged to make a law dealing with land records including record of tenancy rights. In cooperation with the States, larger funds will be allocated for irrigation and extension of cultivation.

Poverty Alleviation

Frontal attack on poverty is an important element in any development policy. This is the main rationale for anti-poverty programmes. Such programmes must be redesigned to ensure generation of more employment, creation of assets, imparting productive skills and raising the incomes of the very poor so that a significant number is brought above the poverty line every year and poverty, as we have known it, is abolished by the year 2005. The United Front Government will review all the anti-poverty programmes with a view to strengthening them and providing them with larger funds. A programme for guaranteeing 100 days of employment for every unemployed person will be implemented through Panchayati Raj [village council system] institutions.

Industry

The key to faster economic growth is rapid, labour-intensive industrialisation. The United Front is committed to maintain a 12 percent annual growth in the industrial sector. This will require massive capital and modern technology, apart from continuing the process of deregulation and decontrol as required. There is ample room for public investment as well as private investment. When it is required to face competition, domestic industry will be assured of a level playing field.

Suitable policies will be devised to stimulate domestic savings and capital formation. The bulk of the industry's requirements will indeed come from within the country. However, at the margin, the country cannot do without foreign investment, particularly if that foreign investment will also bring modern technology and management practices and create new markets for products manufactured in the country.

The nation needs and has the capacity to absorb at least $10 billions a year as foreign direct investment.

Suitable credit and taxation policies will be devised to ensure that the bulk of new investments, both domestic and foreign, will be channel led into the core and infrastructure sectors. Entry of multinational companies into low priority areas will be discouraged through suitable fiscal and other measures. In order to promote even development, suitable incentives and policies will be devised to encourage new industries to locate in the backward districts of the country.

The United Front recognises the role of the corporate sector in building a strong and modern India. The corporate sector should create conditions in which the working class of the country is able to make its contribution with enthusiasm. The United Front Government in its dealings with the corporate sector will follow a policy informed by transparency and fair play and expects that the corporate sector will reciprocate by following the rules and conventions of a healthy market economy. The corporate sector should also keep in mind the paramount interest of the consumer and will be held accountable through an expanded network of consumer courts. The United Front Government will always be ready to engage in a meaningful and constructive dialogue with the corporate sector with a view to strengthening the Indian economy.

The progress towards the goal of bringing India's tariffs in accord with world levels will be measured and calibrated. An independent Tariff Commission will be appointed within three months to hear and determine tariff disputes as well as to recommend appropriate levels of tariffs for different products and different industries keeping in view the larger interests of the country.

There are a number of domestic industries which are essentially home-based or village-based requiring low skills and employing a large number of people. These industries will be given adequate protection and it will be ensured that foreign investment does not displace such industries.

The balance among large, medium and small/cottage industries will be restored. Small and cottage industries have the potential of creating large job opportunities. They are also more elastic in responding to changes in the market. Hence, special plans will be devised to promote small and cottage industries to achieve the twin objectives of growth and employment.

Public Sector

The early decades of development, the public sector played a pioneering role. The public sector will continue to be an important component of Indian industry. The Government will help make the public sector strong and competitive. In a competitive and technology-driven economy, there is no room for monopolies and inefficiency. Public sector enterprises, which are essentially commercial enterprises, should conduct their business on commercial lines. They cannot be allowed to dissave; they should show a healthy return on the capital employed. It is widely acknowledged that the public sector requires to be reformed and restructured. The United Front Government will identify public sector companies that have comparative advantages and will support them in their drive to become global giants. Other profit making and efficient public sector companies will be strengthened and their managements professionalised, and participation of workers in the management of these companies will be encouraged. Sick or potentially sick public sector companies will be rehabilitated through a menu of options that may include handing over the management to professional groups or workers' cooperatives.

The question of withdrawing the public sector from non-core and non-strategic areas will be a carefully examined subject, however, to assuring the workers and employees of job security or, in the alternative, opportunities for retraining and redeployment. The United Front Government will establish a Disinvestment Commission to advise the Government on these steps. Any decision to disinvest will be taken and implemented in a transparent manner. Revenues generated from such disinvestment will be utilised in two vital areas, health and education, particularly in the poorer and backward districts of the country. A part of such revenues will be earmarked to create an investment fund which will be used to strengthen other public sector enterprises.

Industrial Sickness

A new law will be made to deal with industrial sickness and the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction will be completely revamped. The law will also provide for a separate mechanism to deal with sickness in small industries. Efforts will be made to rehabilitate and revive sick industries and protect the interests of the workers.

Labour

Workers form the backbone of the industrial sector. Their rights are spelt out in a number of laws made by Parliament and State legislatures. The United Front Government will ensure that these laws are implemented in the spirit in which the laws were made. The rights of trade unions will be respected and recognition of trade unions will be required to be done by secret ballot.

Some laws have been made in respect of labour in the unorganised sector. These laws will be strengthened and, where necessary, new laws will be made to protect the interests of such labour, particularly in the construction and beedi [local cigar] rolling industries.

Infrastructure

Investment infrastructure has to be stepped up from the present 3.5-4 percent of GDP to at least six percent of GDP in the next few years. The economy cannot grow and the needs of the people cannot be met without more capacity in power, oil, telecom railways, roads and ports. The cumulative requirement of these sectors over the next five years is estimated to be $200 billions (Rs. [rupees] 700,000 crores) at the very minimum. Thus, there is ample room for all modes of investment — public and private, domestic and foreign. The United Front acknowledges that the State and public investment have a leading role to play in the development of infrastructure. The scope, functions and the procedures of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board will be reviewed in order to make it an effective and credible instrument to promote foreign investment in India. Transparent rules and regulations will be drawn up to attract foreign investment and for the award of contracts if any. Every decision on the award of large contracts will be made public together with the process by which the decision was arrived at.

There is a strong link between infrastructure development and financial sector reforms. Infrastructure needs long-term finances. The United Front Government will carry out further reforms of the financial sector so that the flow of both domestic and foreign funds to the infrastructure sector is enhanced substantially. There is room for public and private sector companies to co-exist and compete in the financial sector. We have gained considerable experience in the working of the banking sector. The said experience will be applied to the restructuring of the insurance industry but at the same time public sector companies such as LIC [Life Insurance Corporation], GIC [General Insurance Corporation] etc., will be strengthened.

Public Investment

Here is a crucial role for public investment, particularly in social sectors such as education and health. However, organisational and management changes in these sectors are as necessary as increased investment. Besides, there can be no compromise on efficiency and productivity. Public services and utilities must be made to deliver at the lowest cost. Where there is a need for subsidy, the subsidy must be closely targeted to benefit the really needy and the poor.

Fiscal Management

It is recognised the world over that fiscal prudence is the key to low inflation, stable price levels and rapid growth. The Untied Front is committed to bringing the fiscal deficit to he low four percent of GDP. The management of the fiscal deficit will, therefore, enjoy the highest priority. The United Front Government will continue with tax reforms and take other steps to augment revenues legitimately due to the Government and to curb tax evasion. All unessential and unproductive expenditure will be eliminated. Subsidies will be targeted to the really needy and poor. Public borrowing will be severely restricted and, as far as possible, borrowed money will not be used for consumption expenditure. Growth in domestic debt will be slowed down and a portion of the debt will be retired in a phased manner. These principles of fiscal management will, however, not be followed at the cost of development or investment.

Price Stability

The Public Distribution System [PDS] will be strengthened to meet the twin objectives of price stability and making available essential articles to the poor. Special cards will be given to families below the poverty line and essential articles under the PDS will be barred for the affluent sections of the society. While the responsibility of supplying food grains and essential articles will remain with the Central and State Governments, the management of PDS shops will be entrusted to elected Panchayats and Nagarpalikas.

Food stocks and foreign exchange reserves will be used imaginatively and purposefully to stabilise prices. Speculators, hoarders and black marketeers create havoc with availability and prices of essential articles. Preventive and punitive action will be taken against them. Swift and severe punishment will be meted out to the offenders.

Drinking Water, Primary Health Care and Housing

Although drinking water, primary health care and housing are subjects which fall under the purview of the State Governments, the Central Government also bears a responsibility to ensure that these basic human needs of every citizen are satisfied. Special plans will be drawn up during the Ninth Plan period to ensure that:

Every habitation has access to potable drinking water;

One primary health centre is established for a population of 5,000 people and it is efficiently managed; and

The very poor have access to houses built under the public housing programme or to credit that can be utilised to build their own houses so that the goal of providing a shelter to every family is achieved by the year 2005.

Education

Six percent of the nation's GDP will be earmarked for education. This will be achieved by the year 2000. Fifty percent of these funds will be spent on primary education. Substantial funds will be earmarked for imparting technical and vocational skills and training in order to turn out more employable and self-employed youth. The goal of the National Literacy Mission [NLM] to cover 1998-1999. The NLM will give special attention to the spread of literacy among women.

The United Front is also committed to making the nation fully literate by the year 2005. A special effort will be made in the States where there is very high incidence of illiteracy and constitute the bulk of educational deprivation. Weaknesses and loopholes in the implementation of the literacy programme will be identified and removed.

The mid-day meal scheme will be implemented in all the States to ensure regular attendance and retention in primary and middle schools. In every initiative that is taken to promote the spread of education, the girl child will be a special focus of attention.

Science and Technology

Science and Technology are engines of change and growth. A nation can ignore the advances made in science and technology only at its peril. All-out efforts, including the provision of adequate funds, will be made to promote research and development and to strengthen the national and other laboratories. The United Front Government will adopt and implement a forward-looking policy on science and technology which will help build a modern and self-reliant society on the foundations of a rational outlook, scientific temper, creative work and material progress.

Clean Administration

The United Front is committed to a corruption-free and clean administration. A Bill to set up the Lok Pal [ombudsman] will be introduced in the first Budget session of the 11th Lok Sabha. The Bill will cover the office of Prime Minister as well. All Members of Parliament will be required by law to declare their assets annually before the Lok Pal.

The Official Secrets Act will be reviewed and amended, keeping in tune with the need for openness and transparency in governance. A Bill on Freedom of Information will be introduced within six months to give the people access to information at all levels.

Discretionary quotas, hitherto enjoyed by the Ministers, will be abolished. In areas where it is necessary to make a small number of out-of-turn allotments, such allotments will be made by a committee and in accordance with published rules and guidelines. All exercise of discretionary powers in this behalf will be made public quarterly through a suitable publication equivalent to the gazette.

A Bill on electoral reforms, reflecting the consensus already arrived at, will be introduced in the first Budget session of the 11th Lok Sabha.

A Bill on judicial reforms will be introduced within six months in order to expedite trial of cases and to eliminate delays.

In consultation with the Chief Justice of India and the Chief Justices of High Courts, steps will be taken to dispose of all pending cases within a period of three years.

The United Front Government is committed to fight corruption, particularly corruption in high places, and will take such steps as are necessary and in accordance with the law to restore the confidence and credibility of the offices and institutions of the State.

The people of the country are greatly exercised by the growing emergence of a nexus between politicians, civil servants, businessmen and criminal elements which has been eloquently illustrated by the report of the Vohra Committee. The United Front Government will disclose to Parliament the relevant facts and material which formed the basis of the report of the Vohra Committee. It will also set up a statutory authority with adequate powers to go into these facts and circumstances and make suitable recommendations to identify and punish the guilty with a view to eliminate the role of the "parallel Government".

Jammu and Kashmir

The State of Jammu and Kashmir and its people are an inalienable part of India. The resolution of the problem of Jammu and Kashmir can only be through consulting the wishes of the people. The elections held recently from six Lok Sabha constituencies is a first step in the process of consultation. The United Front is committed to hold elections to the Jammu and Kashmir State Legislative Assembly as soon as possible. Respecting Article 370 of the Constitution, as well as, the wishes of the people, the problems of Jammu and Kashmir will be resolved through giving the people of that State the maximum degree of autonomy.

Assam and the North-Eastern States

The problem of influx of foreigners into Assam will be resolved on the basis of the Assam Accord to which the Central Government is a signatory. The resolution of the issues relating to ULFA [United Liberation Front of Assam] and Bodo Security Force also lies only through a political dialogue. The United Front Government will take up special programmes for the economic development of Assam and the North-Eastern region. The recrudescence of insurgency in Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland is a cause for concern and will be met with a firm resolve to enforce law and order.

Foreign Policy

There is a large measure of consensus on foreign policy which is based on our traditional values and on the experience gained during the freedom struggle and in the post-independence era. Non-alignment is the cornerstone of our foreign policy. The United Front Government will closely adhere to the consensus.

Good and friendly relations with neighbouring countries will receive the highest priority. The SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] forum and SAPTA [South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement] leading to SAFTA [South Asian Free Trade Agreement] will be the principal instruments through which close and friendly relations will be forged between India and her South Asian neighbours.

China is a neighbour of India. Important steps were taken in recent years towards cordial relations and harmony between India and China. Further steps will be taken in this direction.

The United Front Government will work to strengthen the non-aligned movement. It will also actively participate in the deliberations of UNCTAD [UN Conference on Trade and Development] so that the organisation and the member-countries are able to articulate the views of the developing countries.

India has taken many initiatives to become a partner in many multilateral arrangements. For example, the Indian Ocean Rim, APEC and ASEAN. These initiatives will be pursued.

While India has good relations with all countries of the world, it has especially warm relations with the United States and Russia as well as Japan and many countries in Central Asia, South East Asia, the European Union, the Middle-East, Africa and Latin America. These warm relationships will be emphasised while strengthening relations with all countries of the world.

The United Front Government will continue the South-South dialogue in order to make South-South cooperation an important plank of multilateral efforts taken by the developing countries.

The United Front Government will continue to work for universal nuclear disarmament and will retain the nuclear option till this goal is achieved. It will press India's case for permanent membership of the Security Council.

Economic and commercial relations are now important components of our foreign policy. Foreign economic relations will be based on the principle of mutual cooperation and benefit through bilateral and multilateral arrangements.

International Bodies and Treaty Obligations

India has been an active member of the United Nations since its inception. India is also a founder of many international bodies and organisations. These organisations will play an important role in an increasingly interdependent world. The United Front Government will assert India's rights and interests in these organisations. It will also mobilise other developing countries to fight for their rights. In forging international or multilateral agreements, the United Front Government will continue to ensure the interest of the country's agriculture, leading sectors of industry and our genetic resources.

Prasar Bharati [Broadcasting Corporation of India] Act

The Prasar Bharati Act will be reviewed and amended in the light of the recent judgments of the Supreme Court and implemented without further delay.

Environment

The United Front is committed to protecting and preserving the environment and the adoption of green policies in every walk of life. A massive programme for afforestation, wasteland development and revegetation of degraded forests will be launched through Panchayati Raj institutions.

The United Front Government's policy on environment will be consistent with the need for rapid and sustainable economic development. Stern measures will be taken against pollution and polluters. The interests of the workers will be safeguarded when it becomes necessary to relocate polluting industrial units. The displacement of communities as a result of developmental activities will be avoided as far as possible and, in any case, rehabilitation of the displaced families will be made an integral component of any developmental plan.

Millions of young men and women are imbued with idealism. The United Front Government will harness the energies of the youth. They will be recruited in Development Corps and deployed in a large number of public works like afforestation, repair and restoration of canals, waterways and irrigation Systems, etc.

Conclusion

India today is in the midst of a major transition in its economic, social and political life. This is a transition period which will be guided by the need to strengthen the principles of democracy, secularism, federalism and social justice. The ethos of our humanist tradition and the aspirations of the Independence struggle inspire the United Front Government to carry out the above programme. In the building of this new India of equality, justice and fraternity, we seek the fullest participation of all citizens. The hallmark of the United Front Government's approach will be the greater and greater involvement of our people in all its endeavours.

India: More Leaders, Prominent Figures React to Common Program

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[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress Party has broadly welcomed the common minimum program announced by the United Front government.

The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told newsmen in New Delhi that the program is aimed at projecting a consensus on key issues among the constituent parties and avoided extremes. He said economic policy approach of the new government is by and large in tune with the main thrust of the economic policy pursued by the P.V. Narasimha Rao government. He said the program is a statement of intent and it is to be seen how it will be translated into action.

The Rajasthan chief minister, Mr. Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, has criticized the common minimum program of the United Front government for being silent on the national security issue. Mr. Shekhawat said in Jaipur that the program is also silent on issues like illegal migration from Bangladesh and infiltration from Pakistan.

The All India United Christian Movement for Equal Rights has hailed the common minimum program of the United Front which promised extension of reservation [of jobs in public sector organizations and seats in educational institutions] benefits to the dalit Christians [low caste Hindus converted to Christianity]. In a press release in New Delhi, the president of the movement, (Bada Jordenim) has hailed the decision.

India: Prime Minister Comments on Completion of Kashmir Elections

BK0606153196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has said the successful conclusion of the Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir is a vote for peace, normalcy, and restoration of the democratic set up in the state. Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda, in a message today, said that his government is committed to holding assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir at an appropriate time. He said the people of the state have suffered so long because of terrorism and violence being abetted from across the border. Congratulating the people of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Gowda said their cooperation has enabled the government to contain militancy and restore conditions conducive for holding the Lok Sabha polls.

India: Official Defends Safety of Nuclear Power Plants

BK0706042296 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 6 Jun 96

[Article by G.R. Srinivasan, director for health, safety, and the environment of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India: "N-Plants Are Safe" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Antinukes the world over have been writing time and again that Indian nuclear power plants are unsafe. However, the recent report of the Safe Energy Communication Council (SECC) on Indian nuclear power plants needs to be looked at closely for its authenticity. Two years ago, a similar story was telecast on Canadian TV. In India too, some vested interests are calling the same tune.

Are Indian N-plants really unsafe, as claimed by the SECC and others? Such reports only provide a one-sided view. They neither look at the reality nor do they take into account the views of scientists and engineers in the nuclear field while preparing their case.

If Indian nuclear plants are really unsafe as alleged by the SECC, the two units of Tarapur Atomic Power Station would not have been operated continuously for 26 years. They continue to operate and generate electricity. The plant is operating at 74 percent capacity, meeting the energy needs of the Western grid. The other Indian units have also been operating and supplying steady power to the grids. Narora and Kakrapar units have been performing extremely well after modifications were carried out.

India has 120 reactor-operating years experience with a very satisfactory safety record. The environmental radiation exposure from all the nuclear power plants in India has been less than ten percent of the permissible values and five percent of the natural background radiation the public would get any time.

In response to the anti-nuclear campaign launched by the SECC when it released the report "Mythbusters 10 — International Nuclear Power", the World Nuclear News Agency in its March 26 issue reported the comments made by the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), the U.S. nuclear industry trade association, that "SECC's stale rhetoric and cynical exploitation of the Chernobyl tragedy is an attempt to obscure the significant environmental and economic benefits of nuclear power." "Today, 439 nuclear units all over the world meet 17 percent of the world's needs for electricity and cut global emissions of carbon dioxide by about 450 million metric tonnes."

A continuous and dedicated struggle by Indian engineers and scientists, spread over the last several decades, has made possible the gigantic task of harnessing the atom for peaceful uses. Even assuming a highly unlikely accident taking place in any of the Indian nuclear plants, the design is such that public domain would suffer no harmful exposure. At least for India, with 50 percent of the world's thorium reserves, which can yield 300,000 MWs [megawatts] for 300 years, nuclear energy is very important.

It would be better if the antinukes, before writing, get proper briefing from the plant authorities or utility so that they can serve the interests of readers better by providing a balanced view.

Iran

Iran: Tehran Sees U.S. Behind Bahrain's Allegations

LD0606181096 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1654 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bahrain's unfounded allegations concerning Iran's intervention in that country's internal affairs have brought the opposite results for Bahrain in contradiction to the expectation of their designers. They have caused that country's internal crises to be placed at the top of the world news. That is at a time when, since the beginning of the internal violence 18 months ago, Bahrain's political authorities have been trying to prevent the reporting of its internal political crisis by resorting to all political and economic leverages, including the payment of bribes to foreign media. As for the Bahraini authorities' prior awareness of the possibility of the huge cost to Bahrain by making those allegations against Iran, there are three possibilities. First, the country's political authorities were aware of the adverse consequences of such allegations but had to give in to U.S. pressures. The second possibility is that their weakened political insight has robbed them of their foresight in this respect. In that, it is a clear indicator for demonstrating the political weaknesses of that country's authorities, including their failure to respond to internal political demands.

Finally, the third possibility — which is nearer to the truth — is that raising the allegations against Iran has been done with mutual coordination between the United States and Bahrain, and is aimed at pursuing specific objectives. By intervening in this issue, Washington is trying to cover up the concerns of the Arab states over the Likud party's coming to power and the failure of that party to carry out Tel Aviv's commitments and divert their attention from the true enemy of the Muslims. Moreover, the White House is concerned that the common opposition by Iran and Arab states to the Israel-Turkey military agreement might eventually help to bring closer their regional policies. That is why Bahrain's assistance to the United States for pursuing those objectives threatens Arab interests before anything else.

Iran: Commentary Criticizes 'Baseless' Accusations by Bahrain

LD0606125296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0950 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At a meeting with a Kuwaiti official, Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, our country's foreign minister, has mentioned the dangers that threaten security in the Persian Gulf region. [passage omitted]

The comments made by our country's foreign minister are in response to the baseless and futile accusations by the Bahraini authorities, who, by doing so, have endeavored to prepare the ground for expanding the presence of the superpowers in the region and portray internal protests as without roots.

Political analysts believe that the Bahraini unrest is, on the one hand, the result of various rifts in that country and, on the other, the result of the lack of a legal mechanism through which the oppositions can discuss their viewpoints.

A minority in Bahrain is enjoying all the economic advantages, while the majority of the people are facing problems such as poverty and unemployment.

In addition, cultural policies in that country have promoted decadent values which incited widespread opposition by the Muslim people of that country.

Also, from the political standpoint, since that country's Constituent Assembly has been disbanded, the people feel that no grounds exist for their participation in political affairs.

All the protesters somehow agree on this point that, if the country's parliament is to be revived, they can pave the way toward the realization of the majority's demands, through electing their representatives. They have repeatedly emphasized that in their protest they are calling for the reopening of the Bahraini parliament; therefore, they have asked the international circles to put pressure on Bahraini Government to do so.

The opponents of the Bahraini Government regard the reopening of parliament as their legal right, because, in Bahrain's constitution, which was approved after that country's independence, a parliament, whose deputies are elected by the people, is anticipated. The parliament only lasted two years. It was disbanded in 1975 on the instruction of the Bahraini amir. Since then, despite the explicit wording of that country's constitution, Bahrain still remains without any parliament.

Political observers believe that attributing Bahraini internal unrest to abroad, even if they are coupled with the support of the superpowers for Bahrain, cannot result in resolving the problems of this shaykhdom. Resolving the problem needs an appropriate solution, the solution is nothing else but acting on the basis of the Bahraini constitution and accepting the demands of the protesting groups.

Iran: Muslim Bloc Said Only Alternative to Capitulation to Israel

LD0506143096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 2 Jun 96 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "Formation of Muslim Bloc Only Alternative to Capitulation to Tel Aviv"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The leader of the Likud Party, Benjamin Netanyahu, who will be the Prime Minister of the Zionist regime for the next four years, has inherited an Israel with an army vastly superior in size and combat readiness to the Arab armies that fought 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars.

Taking into account that the Likud Party is expansionist by nature, the Muslim countries in the Middle East will have hard days ahead if they remain divided among themselves.

Given the fact that the bipolar world order has gone and there is no Soviet Union to stand by the Arabs in case of another aggression by Israel, the Muslim countries of the Middle East must bridge the gap among themselves and rely on their unity to be able to withstand any probable Israeli aggression.

Moreover, the Ankara-Tel Aviv axis today is a serious threat to Syria, Egypt, Iran and other Muslim countries of the region.

The Muslim countries are encircled by hostile forces. The enemies of the Muslims receive unconditional material and moral support from the White House.

Unfortunately some of the Muslim countries of the region have moved too close to the USA that it is not easy for them to follow an independent foreign policy free from the US influence.

Turkey is now virtually in the US-Israeli camp. Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are the key Muslim countries in the Middle East. In the first instance, the Tehran-Riyadh-Cairo axis should be formed and strengthened to pave the way for a dynamic cooperation among all Muslim countries in the region.

Three countries should spare no effort to cooperate on the minimum possible common areas of interests to prepare a ground for accommodation and cooperation in large areas.

If Tehran, Cairo and Riyadh expand trilateral cooperation, without any doubt the smaller countries of the region will follow suit.

Iran is a strategic ally of Syria. Hence, rapprochement between Tehran, Cairo and Riyadh will be in effect tantamount to a rapprochement between Damascus, Riyadh and Cairo which practically means the formation of a powerful Muslim bloc.

In order to materialize this great dream, Tehran, Riyadh, Cairo and Damascus should sacrifice certain limited national interests for the sake of larger regional interests.

Iran: Commentary on Iranian Involvement in Caspian Sea Oil Deal

LD0606113396 Tehran IRNA in English 0945 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary: "Caspian Sea Graveyard of America's Anti-Iran Foreign Policy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, June 6, IRNA — For the first time in the history, an Iranian private company signed a contract on development and exploitation of oil as a member of a multinational consortium.

Iran's Oil Industries and Engineering Company (OIEC), founded in 1977, is now to participate in the multibillion dollar Shakh-Deniz [name as received] oil project in the Caspian Sea along with oil giants such as the British Petroleum, Norway's Statoil, France's Elf Aquitaine and Russia's Lukoil.

Membership of the Iranian company in this multinational consortium is a great step forward. Added to this is the partnership of the OIEC with giant Western oil companies at a time when the U.S. has decided to impose economic sanctions on Iran, under such circumstances, the deal finds a greater importance.

The project to exploit oil and gas from the Shakh-Deniz field in the Caspian Sea with a reserve of more than 400,000 million cubic meters of gas and 300 million tons of oil is the first major project being carried out in the Caspian Sea without the participation of U.S. oil companies.

Many political observers believe that the Azerbaijan Republic which had experienced the bitter taste of U.S. political games in the Caspian Sea, this time bypassed the Americans for Iran and declined to invite American companies to participate in the Shakh-Deniz project.

According to the analysts, the project is an obvious proof to the failure of U.S. hostile foreign policy towards Iran and heralds beginning of the second phase of depriving the giant American oil companies from projects in the region.

Radio Liberty, affiliated and financed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in a commentary on Wednesday quoting the REUTERS confirmed failure of U.S. policies on Iran.

According to the radio, if the U.S. continues its present policy without taking into consideration the regional geopolitics, undoubtedly it will emerge as the loser in the Caspian Sea.

The radio also added that European oil companies are pleased with the partnership of an Iranian company in the Shakh-Deniz consortium.

OIEC involvement in the Shakh-Deniz project in addition to being a political victory for the Islamic Republic is an achievement which allows the European companies to increase their power in challenging and competing with the American companies in the region.

European companies which are present in the Iranian market with no challenge from their American rivals, will undoubtedly make the situation very difficultt for the American companies by using Iran's technical know-how and equipment.

A foreign oil expert attending the international exhibition in Baku, described Iran as the best route to transfer equipment needed for the exploitation of oil in the Caspian Sea and the most economic and the safest route to transfer crude oil to international markets.

He believed that Iran as a country with high potentials in oil industries can assist the oil companies active in the Caspian Sea region.

Confirming the view, head of Iran's OIEC, 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, expressed hope that his company, as a liaison in the consortium, will put into use all its capabilities and equipment.

In an interview with IRNA, an Azeri journalist underlined the importance of Iran in the region saying the Islamic Republic is the only stable power in the Caspian Sea region which has excellent potentials for export of different kinds of commodities to the littoral states.

The value of the reserves of the Shakh-Deniz field at current prices is estimated at more than $20,000 million.

British Petroleum (BP) and Norway's Statoil each have 25.5 percent of the consortium's shares. France's Elf Aquitaine, Russia's lukoil and Iran's OIEC each have 10 percent while the Turkish oil company has nine percent. The first phase of the project is scheudled to be exploited within three to four years following the implementation of the accord.

Iran: Azeri Official Favors Iran's Inclusion in Oil Consortium

LD0506204396 Tehran IRNA in English
2032 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, June 5, IRNA — The deputy chief of the Azerbaijan Oil Company, Sayyad Ibrahimov, here today rejected reports that his country set preconditions for participation of Iranian oil companies in the exploitation of the Shah-Deniz oil field in the Caspian Sea.

In his interview with IRNA here Ibrahimov called Iran a "friendly country" and indicated that based upon the existing bilateral relations, his country favours inclusion of Iran in a multinational oil consortium.

He said that cooperation between Iran's Oil Industries and Engineering Company (OIEC) and the Azeri oil company was within the framework of mutual interests.

A 30-year contract was signed in the Azeri capital of Baku on Tuesday between Azerbaijan's oil company and a multinational oil consortium comprising of 5 European oil companies and the OIEC — a private Iranian oil firm — for exploiting the Shah-Deniz oil field in the Caspian Sea.

Iran: Deputy Foreign Minister on Relations With Afghanistan

LD0506085296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
0330 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The first joint economic commission between Afghanistan and Iran will soon be held in Tehran.

This was announced yesterday in a news conference in Kabul by Mr. 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, Islamic Republic of Iran's deputy foreign minister for Asian and Oceanic affairs.

The IRNA reports add that Mr. Borujerdi described as positive the results of his several visits to Afghanistan and said: The first round of talks between the representatives of the Afghan Government and the Hezb-e Eslami of Hekmatyar were fruitful. The talks have now become an axis for establishment of peace in Afghanistan.

Mr. Borujerdi said an understanding reached between the Afghan goverment and Hezb-e Eslami was important and stated: The main direction of our efforts is to encourage all groups to negotiate and to resolve their differences peacefully, because the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that any solution prescribed for Afghanistan from abroad will be unsuccessful.

He said negotiations with the Taleban group were a sign of Iran's good intentions and broad-mindedness and added that this did not mean Tehran had changed its policy towards the legal government of Borhanoddin Rabbani.

He expressed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran for Afghanistan's reconstruction after the establishment of peace in that country.

Iran: German Institute To Provide Credits for Iranian Projects

LD0606190096 Tehran IRNA in English 1706 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bonn, June 6, IRNA — German Export Credits Institute has reached agreement with 10 Iranian banks on providing credits for Iran, spokesman of the institute told IRNA correspondent in Bonn. The institute comprised of 42 German banks is in charge of providing credits for German exports.

The spokesman said the institute has entered into a long-term financial accord with Iran according to which it has undertaken to provide credit for Germany's exports to Iran in the framework of state-owned Hermes insurance company.

He said the credits would be allocated for Iranian second five-year development projects.

Initially there existed no ceiling for the credit assurances provided by Hermes to Iran, however, due to the United States continuous pressure, the credit was reduced to one billion deutsche marks [German marks] at one time and then to 500 million deutsche marks. The credit assurance ceiling had stood at 150 million marks during the past several months.

Iranian Ministry of Finance and the Economic Affairs has been the signatory to the agreement with Germany.

Iran: Khamene'i Delivers Address at Khomeyni Memorial

LD0606231096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0955 GMT 5 Jun 96

[Address by Ayatollah 'Ali Hoseyni Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic Revolution, given at a prayer center in Tehran on 5 June — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate: Welcome, dear guests. You have come to this mosque from other countries, from various regions of our dear country, and from Tehran itself. I hope that the saintly and lofty spirit of the noble Imam [Khomeyni] will be pleased with each one of you and all Muslims across the world. This ceremony, which is held every year in respect of our dear Imam, has many benefits. But the most important benefit is to sustain and celebrate his memory. Why? Because the act of sustaining the memory of that great man and his illuminated face is a great blessing for Muslims in Iran and other countries. Sustaining the memory of Imam has blessed effects.

You know that one of the most effective schemes by the enemies of Islam was to humiliate the Muslim nations. Look at Iran, look at Arab countries, look at the Indian subcontinent, look at central Asia, look at the Far East, and look at the Muslim minorities in Europe and the United States. The enemy has executed this policy everywhere: Humiliation of Muslims. This is very important.

But Muslims have the distinction of being able to affect the movement of the world through their own will. This is the distinction of Muslims. Why? Because of the illuminating Islamic laws, the Muslim spirit, and the subsequent attitude that Muslims have in fighting injustice, in opposing corruption and evil, in promoting virtue and prohibiting vice, and in holy war in the path of God — of course holy war in the path of God has an extensive domain and is not limited to physical fighting. Holy war is even possible at one's own home. Holy war has a wide and extensive range. It is possible to fight the enemies of God everywhere. You only need the will and to know how.

Well, you have this collection of Islamic laws, this holy war, this promotion of virtue and prohibition of vice, this fight against corruption, evil and injustice, and such like. This collection of laws and traditions has allowed Muslims, as a nation and as an individual, to affect the management of their environment and the world; this is the distinction of the Muslims. But colonialists are unhappy about this. The unjust people of the world are unhappy about this. Even when the Europeans boarded their ships to come to the countries of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, they feared this spirit among Muslims. To destroy the Muslim threat, they had to do two things. First, to distance them from Islamic laws and second, to destroy their spirit and to humiliate them. All the policies of the enemies of Islam — while they were fighting at the height of this battle in the past several centuries — have been concentrated on these two things: To distance Muslims from Islamic laws, to humiliate Muslims, and to destroy and break their spirits. As a result of this, Islamic countries became third class nations in the world; not even second class ones. All Islamic countries were under the influence of foreign powers and the enemies of Islam; or they had an instrument of foreign power ruling over them. Such was the hated Pahlavi family in Iran, and there were similar ones in other countries. This was the conditions of the Muslims.

Our noble Imam came and put his finger on these two points. This is why the name of Imam stormed the Islamic world — you cannot influence people's hearts with advertising and propaganda — and this is why people love our noble Imam in every corner of the world, even where the name of Iran has not been heard. Such is the divine tradition, the law of creation.

The Imam stressed those two points and subsequently the conscience of the nations awoke. The people saw the path of liberation. Iran became the model. The noble Imam invited the Iranian nation to return to Islam. He said: Come to Islam in the true meaning of the world, not only in your prayers in mosques. Come in totality and learn the way of Islamic life. He formed the Islamic republic, furthermore, he revived and reconstructed the spirit of our nation. He taught the Iranian nation about its own strength. He told the Muslim peoples that they truly had the strength to defeat the enemy. [public chants: God is great, Khamene'i is the leader, death to those who oppose the Guardianship of the Jurisconsult]

No matter where and to whatever extent the prescriptions of the esteemed Imam were put to practice that was the result. In our own country, the Iranian nation rose to such a point, from a state of weakness and reactivity, that its will plays a role in the important issues of the world. Our enemies say that as well. Yesterday the East and West and today's influential powers are trying to destroy the rights of the Palestinian nation. The Islamic Republic of Iran has declared its opposition to this. Everyone, everywhere in the world says that because the Islamic Republic is opposing the peace process, that process will not succeed. This is the will of the Iranian nation, and because this is the will of the Iranian nation, the peace process will not succeed.

A nation...[pauses] The head of Iran's government, the abject corrupt Shah, used to consult the American and British embassies on his day to day affairs; used to receive guidelines from them. That was the situation of the nation then. Now the nation has come to a point where neither America nor any other power has the slightest influence on this country, on this nation. That is national sovereignty for a nation. That is what the esteemed Imam did; he revived the Islamic spirit.

Similarly with respect to construction: He said that you can build anything. He said that you can make your own country prosperous with your own hands. He said that you can be independent of foreigners. He said that you can go through the stages of acquiring learning just like others. He said that you can make your universities independent. Today you see that the nation is going through all this step-by-step. The nation has experienced all this. So much for what happened inside Iran.

In any place in the world where that healing prescription of the Imam was carried out, the nations benefited, depending on how much of it was implemented. Look how the nature of the Palestine issue or the painful issue of Lebanon or various other issues has changed compared with the past. Today the Palestinian nation has awakened. The true Palestinian elements inside the occupied lands show themselves as thorns in the sides of the occupiers. They are not sitting there waiting for a handful of people to speak on their behalf outside the Palestinian borders. The Palestinian nation itself speaks; acts, moves. And it does all of this in the name of Islam.

Wherever that prescription — that is the prescription for self-reliance, self-belief, and return to Islam — was carried out to whatever extent, the superpowers' work became difficult to the same extent and it accelerated the movement of nations. Our great Imam's prescription made Muslims appreciated wherever they were in the world. Today Muslims, no matter where they are, can feel proud. There used to be a day when a Muslim's felt downcast for being a Muslim. Today a Muslim can feel proud for being a Muslim, feel appreciated. All those are the generalities of our esteemed Imam's movement.

What I want to tell you is that, the more the Iranian nation or other nations hold the Imam's name high and keep it alive, the more they will benefit from his ideology. The enemies of Islam and the Muslims wish the Imam's name to be eliminated, lost; his memory to wane. They want this event — although whatever came to pass, has passed — they do not want it to have any effect on the future of the world. You can see the methods they use for that: propaganda, distortions, mud-slinging, poisonous propaganda. Such things exist everywhere within the domain of the influence of the arrogant powers.

The antithesis of that is what the Muslims must do. They must revive the memory of the Imam. They must raise his name high; explain his clear ideology for the public opinion, say what the Imam wanted to achieve, make people understand that the laws of Islam and the honor of Islam are the two shining points that the Imam pursued.

The same is true inside our country. If our nation wishes to follow this honorable path, it should keep the name and memory of the Imam alive every day. If the nation wishes to build an Iran with capable manpower and with initiative and creativity, a state that is the envy of other nations and states, it must pay more attention to the Imam's edicts every day. [crowd chants: God is Great, Khamene'i is the leader, death to the anti-revolutionary, death to Israel, etc]

Some ignorant people might think or might say that the Imam's line and path can ensure spirituality and the after-life for people, but will not help with their present world. This is incorrect. This is incorrect. The path of God will both help this world and ensure an after-life for the people. It makes life easy and sweet, reduces the enemy's pressure and removes it. That is what the path of God is. The Imam's path is the same one: The path of God. The Iranian nation fell behind because of the foreigners intervention, because of corrupt governments. The Iranian nation missed the caravan of knowledge and learning all because of the tyrannical rules of Pahlavi and Qajar, those two disgraceful ruling dynasties. They ruled over this country for many years and cleared the path for the foreigners.

Our nation will be able to take life to its true prosperity, development, and growth when it can stand on its own feet, enact God's laws in life and totally cut off the enemy's hand and the enemies feet from this country. That is the way of the Imam; that is the same as the Imam's recommendations. The Iranian nation will have honor in the world, material welfare in the world, a good name in the world, and good spiritual fortune and perfection in after-life through the same ideology that it's esteemed Imam, its exalted leader, has put before it. God Almighty gave him 10 years of grace and he was able to clarify that path for the people. There is no hidden or suspect point in the words of the Imam, may God be satisfied with him. This is the path of the Iranian nation.

I tell you that our beloved nation, my brethren and sisters throughout this land, should take advantage of this anniversary. It should value this opportunity to revive the Imam's teachings, to remember them. Let anyone, anywhere make the teachings their guidelines; the officials, the executives, the people's representatives. If that happens then the sanctified heart of the Lord of the Time [the hidden 12th Shi'i Imam], our souls be sacrificed for him, will, God willing, be satisfied with this nation; divine blessings will descend upon you. God Almighty has said in the Koran [Koranic verse in Arabic]. God will bless this nation under the auspices of that path, of piety, and of the continuation of the movement that the esteemed Imam began in this country. We hope that God Almighty gives you success, makes the sanctified heart of the Lord of Time satisfied with you, acquaints the Muslims of the world with this path forever, acquaints the authorities of the Islamic countries with their crucial responsibilities, eliminates the enemies' plots and evil from all the world of Islam and, God willing, secures Islamic unity that is the support for all those things. God's blessings be upon you. [crowd chants: We are obedient to you, Khamene'i]

Iran: Rafsanjani Says U.S. Attempts To Isolate Iran Have Failed

LD0706095496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0740 GMT 7 Jun 96

[Second sermon of Friday Prayers delivered by Iranian President Hashemi—Rafsanjani at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted]

Another issue of today concerns the anniversary of the imposition of new U.S. sanctions against Iran. Here we should also ponder and think. It is about a year since America, resorting to a great deal of propaganda and hue and cry, announced the sanctions against Iran. Mr. Clinton announced the U.S. intention to impose sanctions against Iran while wearing a Zionist skullcap at the congress of Zionists. He thought that with this gesture he could force Iran to go back a few steps, make it surrender, or admit defeat.

This is indeed a significant event. Indeed, it is an event worthy of attention. The decision caused many international observers to express amazement. America is behind this decision with all its heavy weight. The Americans passed bills at the U.S. Congress, they passed bills in their cabinet, they resorted to propaganda, and did whatever they could to make the sanctions work. Now a year has passed. Let us see how successful they have been.

Today, any social or economic analyst accepts that America has failed. Even the U.S. analysts have admitted that. They all accept that the Americans have been playing with knives all this time; they have only harmed themselves. There was a chance for a number of Americans to benefit from our oil and our market. They were denied that chance and Iran has not been not harmed in any way. It has only made us more alert and made us carry out our tasks more carefully and cautiously.

Just before America announced its sanctions, the value of the dollar had gone way beyond 500, 600 or 700 tumans, and it was rising all the time. When we realized that we were at war — an economic war — we organized our affairs, and you yourselves saw that everything was sorted out. That happened just because we felt it necessary to pay more attention to our economy in the face of a bullying enemy like America.

You see, a year has passed and such a big power, with all that propaganda, has not managed to inflict the slightest harm against this revolution. That is a source of great pride for us. [participants chant slogans in support of spiritual Leader 'Ali Khamene'i and President Hashemi-Rafsanjani]

Thank you all. May God protect you, the people. If we have achieved anything it is thanks to you, thanks to the people's support. It is you who have laid the main foundations of these proud achievements.

The last issue I wish to discuss is the month of Muharram, which coincides with the era when the Prophet Muhammad's family suffered a great deal. Several days have passed since Ashura. We are still bereaved. We think of the suffering tolerated by the survivors of the Karbala epic. [passage omitted]

May God's peace and mercy be upon you all.

Iran: Commentary Views New Majles

LD0506145096 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 2 Jun 96 p 2

[Commentary by 'Ali Akbar Dareini: "New parliament and new challenges"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The newly-elected MPs with no particular political tendency are the busiest people in Iran nowadays. They are invited to meetings and banquets day and night and they have no time to accept appointments, even from members of their own family.

The biggest rival factions in parliament, namely the conservative [Jame'eh-ye Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez, Militant Clergy Association] (JRM) led by 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri and the moderate Khematgozaran-e Sazandegi or G-6 [Group of Six, servants of construction, reference to reformist faction of Iranian officials around President Rafsanjani] led by former interior minister 'Abdallah Nuri are doing all they can to lure the undecided MPs into their camps.

The role of undecided MPs are crucial in the composition of the new parliament. The JRM, which has a thin majority at the moment, will be strengthened should the undecided MPs join the faction, but it will lose its majority should they choose to join the rival moderate G-6.

Even weeks before Saturday's session, the rival factions have been battling for greater support.

Political observers say both factions will get their share of the undecideds and that the JRM will maintain a relative majority in the parliament. However, one thing is certain. The JRM will not have the power to easily approve or reject proposals and bills. That means the future parliament will not be entirely JRM's and the faction will not be able to keep the parliament under its control. The moderates, on the other hand, are powerful enough as a force that must be reckoned with.

The hottest debate in the parliament on Saturday was who is going to be the next speaker. JRM has nominated Nateq-Nuri for the post and G-6 'Abdallah Nuri. The Association for Defending the Values of the Islamic Revolution (ADVIR) suggest Nateq-Nuri as speaker and Nuri as vice speaker.

G-6 has rejected the seat of vice speaker for Nuri and JRM says it will not allow G-6's wish to be granted.

According to the Constitution, the most senior member of the Majles should be appointed as its provisional president until a provisional speaker and a presidential board are elected. The combination of the provisional presidential board will play an important role in determining the members of the presidential board.

Of course, the behavior and the activities of the new parliament will be important for the presidential elections, but winning the highest executive post will be an uphill battle for both factions, as is the election of speaker now.

The G-6 is also counting on the promise of other small factions for support such as the former left-wingers and the MPs aligned with the "Labor House."

Anyhow, the two major factions are holding separate meetings and are flexing their muscles and all observers are closely looking to see which faction will win the first and the big battle in the new parliament.

Irrespective of which faction's candidate is going to win the speaker's seat, the new parliament is more controversial with the participation of different tendencies, and it faces serious challenges ahead.

Iran: Lawmakers Shoulder Crucial Responsibilities

LD0506142696 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 2 Jun 96 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "New lawmakers Shoulder Crucial Responsibilities"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Parliament, or the legislative body, plays a key role in the entire democratic process which is a necessity for any country expecting respect in the international society.

From the very first day of the culmination of the Islamic revolution in 1979, leader of the deprived, Imam Khomeyni, underscored the democratic process. And this was the reason that during the first year after the culmination of the Islamic revolution the Imam invited the nation to the polling booths five times to give free and fair opinion on vital national issues.

There are very few countries that made the transition to democracy so completely and smoothly as the Iranian nation did, and for that the Majles played its due role.

Yesterday [1 June], the fifth term of the Majles was inaugurated with a message from the leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i and a speech by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Iran, even 17 years after the victory of the Islamic revolution, is still facing hostilities from the oppressive powers just because the revolution had cut the hands of the colonialists and expansionist powers from Iran.

The United States, dubbed the Great Satan by the late Imam, is leaving no stone unturned in defaming and isolating Iran. Of course with no success.

The Revolution owes a lot to the nation which was exploited by foreign oppressors during the dictatorial system before the 1979 revolution.

The leader, Ayatollah Khamene'i, was right to remind the lawmakers to pay 'greater attention' to the 'ideals and aspirations' of the Islamic Revolution.

We are sure that Majles deputies are fully cognizant of their responsibilities and will work according to the guidance of the leader.

It will not be out of place if few points are noted by the lawmakers. The most important is the national unity. They should do all to keep the unity intact along with the country's overall development.

Our country has a lot of good and just laws. Those laws should be implemented in the interest of the common people with the strict supervision of the legislators.

The most important is the supervision of the national budget. Even a single rial of the national budget should not go to waste and should be invested for the improvement of the common people.

No room is left for financial corruption if national wealth is spent in a proper way. The Iranian national has made unprecedented sacrifices for the revolution and also to preserve and keep it intact. This nation will not tolerate any sloppiness and carelessness from any side of the government, and for that the legislative body shoulders the most crucial responsibility.

Iran: Fifth Majles Urged To Tackle Economic Problems

LD0606122496 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 2 Jun 96 p 4

[Article by Dr. Habib Chini; from the "Economic Note" column: "The Fifth Majles and the Country's Economic Problems"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday the Fifth Majles was officially inaugurated. Naturally it will take time for the Majles to approve the deputies' credentials and to find its legs, so to speak, and begin work while the country's affairs are not stoppable even for a moment. Therefore efforts must be made to shorten the Majles formalities as far as possible and for the Majles to begin its essential role. Economic issues, which the Majles is faced with, will take up the most important part of their time. The priorities are quite clear:

The Majles term will witness the presidential election within less than a year of its existence. The elections for the chief executive of the country will affect the guidelines and styles in the country's executive branch and plans whether one wishes it or not. That is regardless of how often it is declared officially that nothing will change in any of the plans since many issues take on a subjective aspect at least from the method and style points of view. The fifth Majles must choose a way so that the trend of growth and development does not slacken or grind to a halt at any juncture. That trend in fact must expand. The supervisory role of the Majles undoubtedly is of particular importance, especially at this sensitive juncture in our country's history.

Bearing in mind that the esteemed leader [Ayatollah Khamene'i] has asked the government to make the elimination of oil from exports [as published] as a strategic plan, the issue naturally takes on a special priority. The fifth Majles must draw up the necessary plans for this or put the relevant government bill through expert assessment, pass them and monitor their implementation. That is a difficult task and a sensitive responsibility which must progress in all cases along with expert plans. Even in cases where publicity is required, it must be totally weighed and carried out with expertise. It may not be too difficult to excite the man in the street but the correct execution of this task — which can in a way be interpreted as the creation of national belief in making efforts toward the expansion of job-creating exports together with added value — requires particular competence in publicity. In this regard the Majles is the first platform.

During the life of this Majles, the second [development] plan must be completed and the third development plan approved and implemented. The second five year plan has reached the middle of its second year. The remaining projects of the first plan must be completed and those particular to the second plan must continue, bearing in mind their priorities. The approved priority for the second plan is the development of agriculture, taking into account the revival of soil and water resources. To be fair valuable efforts have been made in this respect in recent years. Now another priority has been raised, which fortunately complements the first one, and that is the elimination of oil from exports. That will bring about new opportunities for increased agricultural products and products from its affiliated industries, aimed at exporting the surplus to domestic consumption.

The plan for eliminating poverty, which was attended to with greater emphasis last year, must be taken into account as a radical and fundamental plan. In this respect, we have given our view in this column in detail and others also have extensively commented on it. Recently there was a seminar where some standpoints on the issue were raised. On the whole no ambiguous point remains with regard to this subject. There is only the need for reforming methodology and structures, eliminating legal and regulatory hurdles; this is where the fifth Majles must act urgently and decisively.

The fight against poverty is linked to the fight against inflation. Fundamental steps should, therefore, be taken within the program of eliminating poverty to harness the complex socioeconomic problem of inflation. [passage omitted]

Elimination of poverty also requires plans to reduce the number of monopolies. Neither the state nor the private sector should monopolize trade or means of production. It is essential that the fifth Majles should pass laws to remove monopolies and punish those who create new monopolies. If that were to happen, a fundamental step would be taken toward the country's economic development.

We should not forget that the plan to reduce dependency on the income from the oil export necessitates development of new export items to replace oil. However, this does not mean creation of a monopoly to produce poor quality and expensive goods for export. If we are planning to compete at the world market, our products must be able to compete in quality and price. This will only be possible through promotion of a free economy, without the creation of monopolies. Unless we follow these steps, we will become prisoners in the four walls of our slogans. We shall discuss the issue more in our later editions.

Iran: Hezbollah Urges Exposure of Deputies Backed by Capitalists

LD0606091596 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 1 Jun 96 p 15

[Unattributed report: "Hezbollah Supporters Issue a Statement to Mark Opening of the Fifth Majles"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Simultaneous with the opening of the fifth term of the Islamic Consultative Majles, Ansar-e Hezbollah [Supporters of Hezbollah] issued a statement today inviting the deputies of this Majles term to show persistence in their monitoring of the way laws are being passed, the performance of the government, and their lack of compromise with unpious elements. [passage omitted]

In part of its statement, Ansar-e Hezbollah called on the deputies of the fifth Majles to pinpoint those who misuse the national funds [beyt ol-maal], reveal their names, and pursue their line of investigation without resorting to favoritism or nepotism, and, without undermining the esteemed president, closely investigate each and every politician without any consideration.

The statement further adds: We ask the honorable deputies to expose the very tiny minority among their colleagues who have been sponsored by the affluent capitalists and the indolent rich to promote their own cause in the Majles. We witnessed that during the elections for the fifth Majles some candidates tried to win votes by making demagogical promises. They promised the voters that an open economic and cultural climate will be created. By showing the green light to the Americans and the fugitive rich abroad and by promising to hold talks with the bankrupt opposition and the isolated liberals, they have set foot on a path that will lead to a bitter end.

The statement further adds: Unfortunately, a number of these candidates have managed to pass through the people's barrier and the screening process of the Guardian Council. They have now entered the Majles, but if they think that they can stage a parliamentary coup d'etat to reach a compromise with the United States and take part in the Middle East peace process over the Palestine issue, they are pursuing a futile dream. They must realize that the Hezbollah majority in the Majles will prevent them from hoisting the flag of Western capitalism and liberals over the Majles roof. If they were to succeed in their plans, the sons of the battlefront and the mothers of the martyrs will drag them from their seats in the parliament to the surrounding streets in order to face a revolutionary trial.

The statement stresses the importance of maintaining respect for the principle of Velayat-e Faqih and sanctity of the esteemed leader and concludes: The people sacrificed thousands of their sons on the Faw, Shalacheh, Hawr, and Kurdestan battlefronts to safeguard this principle. Anyone dreaming of violating this principle and its sanctity will be left with broken legs.

Iran: Engineers Repair Baltic Company's Cargo Ship

LD0506164496 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian
2 Jun 96 p4

[Unattributed article entitled: "Iran Repairs Foreign Cargo Ship"]

[FBIS Translated Text] For the first time ever, engineers and experts working for Iran's shipbuilding industry have successfully repaired a foreign cargo ship.

The Central News Unit reports that the 18,000-tonne "Marusinski" cargo ship, which belongs to the Baltic International Transport Company, one of the world's largest and most reputable sea transport organizations, is 180 meters long and 23 meters wide.

An Iranian shipbuilding company successfully carried out the necessary repairs on the ship's propeller and its guidance system, which uses a variable pulse method.

The report notes that this is the first time that an international transport company has asked an Iranian company to repair its naval vessels.

Iran: Bank Governor Says G-6 MPs Hold 60 Percent Majles Majority

LD0506142796 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English
2 Jun 96 p 1, 13

[Report by Mehrdad Serjooie: "G-6 MPs Hold 60% Majority"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran — Deputies supported by the G-6 [Group of Six, reformist faction of Iranian officials around President Rafsanjani] constitute a 60 percent majority in the Fifth Majles, Mohsen Nurbakhsh, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and a member of the executives of Construction Group (G-6) told 'Iran News' yesterday [1 June].

Discussing possible defections into the JRM [Jame'eh-ye Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez, Militant Clergy Association] camp by some G-6 sponsored deputies, Nurbakhsh said members of parliament are elected by the constituents and because of their independent thinking and power of discernment, they are capable of making the right decision.

"It was our duty to help elect competent and qualified deputies for the Majles and that is why we got involved in the process. Nevertheless, we believe that the Majles deputies have complete freedom to act," the CBI governor concluded.

Iran: Readers Complain About 'Lawbreakers' Corrupting Children

LD0606084296 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian
1 Jun 96 p 2

[From the readers' column]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of gamblers and lawbreakers gather daily in the narrow lanes near Razi Square, south of Kargar Avenue. Without any fear and in total peace of mind, they mislead young boys and encourage them to break the law.

Past experience has shown that these individuals are only afraid of the basij forces [Islamic mobilization vigilantes]. However, thanks to the restrictions introduced in the existing law on prohibition of vice, the basij forces are reluctant to challenge these louts and riffraff.

We, the inhabitants of the district, have signed a petition asking the relevant authorities to save our children from the trap laid by these corrupt individuals.

[Signed] A group of inhabitants in the district.

Iran: Students March To Demand Expulsion of Liberal Lecturers

LD0506145896 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian
2 Jun 96 p 2

[News report: "Students and Staff of Teacher Training University March To Demand Expulsion of Liberal Elements From All Universities"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of students and staff from the Teacher Training University staged a rally yesterday to express support for His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i's remarks on Islamization of universities.

According to a report from our correspondent, the group marched inside the university campus chanting "O Khamene'i, we are your soldiers and your orders are our command." They also demanded that in accordance with instructions of the leader [Khamene'i], universities must become Islamic by sacking liberal and unpious elements from educational and managerial posts.

At the end of the rally, the demonstrators issued a resolution demanding expulsion and removal of those elements who advocate separation of religion from politics.

Iran: SAFF Describes Zolfaqar Tank

96LA0232A Tehran SAFF in Persian
No 192, 21 Apr-20 May 96 pp 14-15

[FBIS Translated Text] Among the positive results of the victory of the Islamic revolution of Iran was the idea of independence and liberation from dependency on foreign countries. This made all the manufacturers, creative people, and those involved in related affairs enter an extensive and difficult battle, and by utilizing the existing resources, to take steps to eliminate dependence.

Perhaps the occurrence of eight years of war imposed on Islamic Iran is one of the most important reasons for the Armed Forces, more than other government organizations and centers, displaying genius and astonishing talent in this battle and, by building hundreds of kinds of parts and varied equipment, proving their strong determination regarding the self-sufficiency battle.

Even so, the foreign countries, in the same way that they did not believe the victory of the Islamic revolution and regarded the fruition of the people's struggles as impossible, did not regard the self-sufficiency battle as serious. But with the publication of the continuous reports regarding the manufacture of various military tools and equipment by the domestic fighters, they have engaged in actions in the region to neutralize its positive consequences and in various ways have tried to downplay the accomplishments in the country as unrealistic or unimportant.

The Iran Zolfaqar tank is among the issues that interest them, causing them to publish contradictory reports about it.

The astonishment and stunning result of the publication of the report of the manufacture of a tank by Iran has caused as much astonishment in the foreign media as it has brought about their unmeasured and crass reactions, and it has caused them not to be able to take a specific and clear position regarding it. "In this connection, JANES DEFENSE WEEKLY publication published an article called, "The Iranian Tank Poses More Questions Than Answers," which tries to diminish the issue of the production of the tank in Iran, and by stating that the Zolfaqar tank consists of assembled parts of other tanks regards the issue of the production of the tank as irrelevant.

In order to make our dear readers more familiar with the reaction of the foreign media to the news of the manufacture of the military parts and equipment by Iran, we are publishing the text of JANES DEFENSE magazine regarding the manufacture of the Zolfaqar tank:

The latest pictures of the Zolfaqar tank made in Iran have broadened its secrets, and it is thought to have numerous designs.

Recent reports indicate that in the Zolfaqar tank, some of the parts of the Russian T-72 tank are used (report on 25 February of J/D weekly magazine). Further analysis of the pictures, however, indicates that the body and the turret are welded, which displays little resemblance to the T-71 tank.

The continuous track and other foreign parts (six pairs of road wheels and a continuous track) are very similar to the M-60 series of tanks manufactured in the United States that have been serving the Iranian military for many years. In any case, the body of the Zolfaqar tank is more box-shaped and not like the boat-shaped M-60 series of tanks. The two exhaust pipes at the back of the body probably verify the use of a V-type engine.

The main weapon of the tank is a 125 mm gun without machine guns, which is equipped with a gas evacuation sleeve and probably an automatic bullet smelter. The gun is placed in a narrow compartment, and no machine gun installed on the tank is evident. No optical systems are visible on the turret and other upper parts. Television film shows the Zolfaqar tank shooting at stationary targets with penetrating bullets, but, looking at the moving pictures of the tank on uneven ground, it does not seem to have a stabilizer system.

In many respects it seems that the turret resembles that of the Brazilian Osorio tanks, which are manufactured for export but never succeeded in creating a production line, and it also resembles the U.S. M-1 Abrams tanks.

The tank commander is located on the right and a gunner on the left. Two prototypes of the Zolfaqar were seen on television, with numerous minor differences. The hatch over the command in one is similar to the T-72 tanks and other resembles an Israeli tank with an external 12.7 mm machine gun installed.

The production of battle tanks is a long, involved process. From the time it starts to the production of the first prototype, the M-1 tanks of the United States took about nine years and enjoyed full systematic industrial support. When the Engesa Company produced the first prototype of the Osorio, the turret, the engine, and the movement and suspension systems were all designed and built by European companies, such as Vikers, SFIM, and Marconi.

Iran may have the capability of assembling tanks well, but it is doubtful whether all the parts used in the Zolfaqar tank are produced in the country; they probably have to be imported. The production of the Zolfaqar tank was revealed in April 1994.

Iran had earlier claimed that it was manufacturing tanks called T-72Z.

Iran: President Addresses Environmental Group

LD0506143396 Tehran IRNA in English 1353 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 5, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here Wednesday that negligence of the protection of the environment would have bitter consequences and would be dangerous for the life of mankind.

President Rafsanjani, who was speaking to directors and officials at the Environment Protection Organization here Wednesday, said that the world today, understanding harmful impacts of the negligence towards the issue, considers the fact as a trans-national and international subject.

Touching on the importance that nature's influence has on the life of human beings, he called for more effort to prevent pollution and destruction of the environment through raising public knowledge and checking pollutant industries.

Iran: Majles Deputies Criticize ETTELA'AT's Handling of Report

LD0306194996 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 30 May 96 p 2

[Article: "Fifteen Deputies of the Fourth Majles Criticize ETTELA'AT for its Approach Toward a Report of the Inquiry and Investigation Into Tehran's Municipality"]

[FBIS Translated Text] News service: 15 deputies of the fourth Majles have written a letter to the great leader of the revolution criticizing the working practices of the daily ETTELA'AT in its handling of the report of the inquiry and investigation into Tehran's municipality.

The letter said that, in addition to its legislative duties, the fourth Majles had tried not to ignore other duties entrusted to it, such as inquiry and investigation, our correspondent related.

The letter also praises a number of newspapers for reflecting constructive criticism about the executive apparatus and says that there are a number of dailies, such as ETTELA'AT, that are being fed by the treasury. These are not reflecting the report of the inquiry and investigation, and have further weakened their position by publishing a letter sent to them by the same organization involved in the inquiry.

In conclusion the letter reads: On the one hand, the daily ETTELA'AT has not published the report of the inquiry and investigation, and on the other it has published a letter sent by the mayor of Tehran addressed to the speaker of the Islamic Majles. The question is why the daily ETTELA'AT, which must reflect impartially the facts presented by the Majles forum, acts in such a way.

Iran: Editor in Chief of PAYAM-E DANESHJU Appears in Court

LD0306195096 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 29 May 96 p 2

[Legal report: "The First Court Session of the Trial of the Editor in Chief of PAYAM-E DANESHJU Was Held"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first court session of Heshmatollah Tabarzadi, editor in chief of the weekly PAYAM-E DANESHJU, was held on Sunday [23 May] at Branch 37 of Tehran's public court located in the Imam Khomeyni central judicial complex.

Our correspondent reports that the trial opened in the presence of a press jury. The head of the court mentioned the background and the policies of the weekly and then the plaintiffs described their complaints.

The editor in chief of the weekly requested more time from the court to respond to the complaints and to prepare documents. The head of the court agreed and postponed the investigation until 10 June.

Iran: HAMSHAHRI Available on Internet From 21 Jun

LD0306210996 Tehran HAMSHAHRI in Persian 30 May 96 p 1

[News report: "Daily To Become Available Via Internet"]

[FBIS Translated Text] From 21 June 1996, the daily HAMSHAHRI will be published on the internet, and readers home and abroad will be able to access the paper simultaneously. To place an advertisement in the paper you can apply from now on by ringing the following telephone numbers: Tehran 2509700 and 2509701.

The paper's electronic mail address on the internet is: http:// www.neda.net/hamshahri/ .

Iran: Daily—Voice and Vision Blatant in its Biased Approach

LD0506161096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 2 Jun 96 p 3

[From the "Complaints" column: "A Reader Complains That Iranian Radio and Television Blatantly Supports Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [letter from unidentified reader] Apparently Voice and Vision [radio and television station] intends to pursue its mission concerning the [Majles] elections until total success is achieved. An interview with 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri during the "Political Roundtable" program on Iranian television on 30 May on the threshold of the election of the Majles speaker, and its rebroadcast on 31 May, can have no other justification.

I only wish to tell our brothers at Voice and Vision that at least for the sake of appearing to be impartial, they should have also interviewed His Excellency Abdullah Nuri for five minutes or so in order that the esteemed Majles deputies could have heard both views and elect the best.

SALAM: We should remind our dear reader that Voice and Vision, contrary to what this esteemed reader thinks, has never claimed to be impartial. It is blatant in its biased approach and because it has the loudest voice among the media it can create such hue and cry that it drowns out other voices and does whatever it likes and pays no attention to public opinion and what the public thinks or says.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Reiterates Support for Kashmiri Cause

BK0606045096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has reiterated that the government is determined to eradicate terrorism, the Kalashnikov culture, sectarianism, and parochialism, and there will not be any compromise on principles. Inaugurating the (Nayisalian) bridge constructed at the cost of 180 million rupees over the river Ravi in Lahore this evening, she said the People's Democratic Front government has successfully gained control over terrorism and restored peace in Karachi. Regarding the Pakistan People's Party, she said it has its roots throughout the country, including Northern Areas, Azad Kashmir, and Tribal Areas. In fact, this party is a symbol of national unity and cohesion. She said the government is determined to provide basic amenities to people and several welfare schemes are being implemented in urban and rural areas in this regard. She announced that local body elections will be held in the country this year.

Referring to Kashmir, the prime minister said Pakistan will continue its support for the struggle for freedom. She said that by boycotting the election process in occupied Kashmir, the people of Kashmir have rejected India's drama of holding sham elections. Paying glowing tributes to the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, she lauded the Kashmiris for making sacrifices to realize the right of self-determination.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is inaugurating the new Sevan airport in Dadu District tomorrow.

Pakistan: Bhutto Speaks on Karachi, Offers Talks With Opposition

BK0606160996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said that her government believes in helping the masses and has been doing its best to solve their problems. Inaugurating the newly built airport at Sehwan Sharif today, she said better means of communication are necessary for the convenience of the people, as well as for the economic and industrial development. The prime minister said the government, being aware of the travel needs of the people, is establishing airports in remote areas of the country. [passage omitted]

Talking to reporters in Karachi this afternoon, Benazir Bhutto said the Pakistan People's Party government wants to ensure a better future for the country, to strengthen its economy, and enhance Pakistan's image in the community of nations. She wants to see Pakistan playing the role of a vanguard in the Islamic world.

Referring to the Karachi problem, the prime minister said there have been some informal talks, but if talks are held with an agenda, it would be better. She added that the agenda of the talks is currently being discussed. The prime minister said that at the time of the presidential election in the country, the Altaf Group [of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement] had demanded that, as a goodwill gesture, the Army be withdrawn and an Urdu-speaking governor be appointed in Sindh. We did that as a gesture of goodwill, but in return we got dead bodies, she lamented. The prime minister declared that if peace prevails, local body elections will be conducted this year and after that there will be no excuse left and they will have to have a serious dialogue. On our part, we believe in dialogue to find a political solution, Benazir Bhutto observed. Referring to the development work being undertaken by the government in Karachi, she said the problems of water and electricity are being solved. The prime minister said that the first priority of her government is to ensure peace in the country and that those who oppose peace are the enemies of Pakistan. She said the present government is a responsible one, and if it imposes taxes, it does for the betterment of the country.

Answering a question about talks with opposition leader Mian Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister said our doors are open for any kind of constitutional negotiations. She said her government considers corruption as a serious problem and has taken several steps to eliminate this evil.

Replying to a question about the opposition leader's proposal to establish a permanent commission for accountability, the prime minister said there are measures in the Constitution that check corruption, and that justice requires the accused persons be given the right to appeal. The proposed commission would not help in eliminating corruption. She said the person who is suggesting the establishment of such a commission is actually trying to cover up corruption, not eliminate it.

Pakistan: Spokesman Announces Bhutto To Address Habitat II

BK0606123296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto will lead the Pakistani delegation to the UN conference on human settlements, which is in progress in the Turkish city of Istanbul. The prime minister will lead Islamabad on Tuesday [11 June] for Istanbul and will deliver a keynote address at the Habitat II conference on Wednesday. A Foreign Office office spokesman told newsmen in Islamabad today that Pakistan is to take part in the conference in an effective manner and its high-level participation underlines the importance it attaches to human settlements and housing problem.

Asked whether Pakistan has received any response to the offer of the prime minister to Indian leadership for formal talks to settle the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir and other outstanding issues, the spokesman said Pakistan is waiting for a formal response from New Delhi.

Pakistan: PTV Notes Positive Indian Response to Bhutto Talks Offer

BK0606144496 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto will pay a one-day visit to Turkey on Tuesday to attend the ongoing UN conference Habitat II. This was announced by a Foreign Office spokesman in a briefing in Islamabad today. The spokesman said the prime minister will also avail the opportunity to discuss with her Turkish counterpart matters of bilateral and mutual interest.

Commenting on the failure of BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] to get vote of confidence and the consequent assumption of power by the United Front, the spokesman termed it an internal matter of India. The spokesman said the question of most favored nation status to India by Pakistan has been misinterpreted. It does not give any special treatment to India. The government decision will be based on the national interest.

To a question on the possibility of National Conference led by Farooq Abdullah taking part in the state assembly elections in held Kashmir, the spokesman said the history of National Conference is replete with negative politics.

New Indian Government has positively responded to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's offer for talks to resolve the Kashmir issue through peaceful means. Reports PTV special correspondent Ghulam Nabi Khayal from New Delhi:

[Begin recording] The renewed offer for holding of talks between India and Pakistan by the Pakistan prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, has met with a positive response in the corridors of power and other political circles here in New Delhi. Prime Minister Bhutto in her message of felicitation to new Indian prime minister, Deve Gowda, had reiterated to sit across the table for a search for lasting peace. While commenting on it, Indian Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral said our response will be helpful. We are willing to discuss anything on earth with our neighbors. The defense minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav, expressing similar sentiments, has said that his government wanted to maintain good relations with the neighbors. The Hindu nationalist organization, Bharatiya Janata Party, has also described Prime Minister Bhutto's offer as a welcome move. Indo-Pakistan dialogue has remained stalled since January 1994 after the seventh round of foreign secretary-level talks. Ghulam Nabi Khayal, PTV News, New Delhi. [end recording]

Pakistan: Spokesman Reacts to Indian Offer of Kashmir Autonomy

BK0606152096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has said Pakistan is waiting for a formal response from

India to the offer of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to Indian leadership for formal talks to settle the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir and other outstanding problems. He was replying to a query by newsmen during a regular briefing in Islamabad today.

To a question about the Indian Government announcement made yesterday, which promised autonomy in occupied Kashmir, the spokesman said there is nothing new in it and such offers have been rejected by the people of Kashmir in the past. Kashmiris have time and again made it clear that a plebiscite under the supervision of the United Nations is the only solution to the Kashmir problem. The sham elections in occupied Kashmir have hardly contributed to lessen the trouble of the Kashmiri people. India has failed to break the resolve of Kashmiris struggling for the right of self-determination and any attempt to hold legislative assembly elections will meet the same fate.

The spokesman said the Commerce Ministry has been examining the question of granting most favored nation status to India in trade. He, however, clarified that this does not mean that India would enjoy more incentives than the other trading partners of Pakistan.

About Afghanistan, he said Pakistan has accepted the apology of Kabul regime on the burning of its embassy, while discussions are on about compensation. He said Pakistan's dialogue with all Afghan factions is continuing and we support efforts of UN and OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] for reconciliation in Afghanistan.

Pakistan: Islamabad Reports Kashmiris' Reaction to Indian Talks Offer

BK0606152996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mir Waiz Umar Farooq, says India's recognition of Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory and talks between the representatives of India, Pakistan, and Kashmiris are the two basic requirements for solution of Kashmir dispute. Commenting in Srinagar on the new Indian Government's offer of talks, he said a way out for a peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute might be found if India gives proof that it is actually serious in finding a peaceful solution.

A spokesman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Professor Abdul Ghani Butt, said the Hurriyat Conference would give its considered view on the Indian offer only when it was received in black and white and spelt out in clear terms.

Meanwhile, reports from Anantnag-Islamabad say the Kokarnag area has been turned into a military cantonment on the pretext of search for foreign hostages. Houses are being ransacked, the people are being given deadly drubbing, and women are being disgraced.

Pakistan: Asif Clarifies Statement on Talks With India

BK0506140196 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 5 Jun 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Staff Correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, June 4 — Reacting to an editorial appearing in The Muslim's issue of June 4, under the heading "Can the FM clarify" Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said that he has read with astonishment the editorial seeking a clarification on a statement which he did not make.

In a letter to the Editor, he said that the factual position is that as he emerged from the meeting of the Parliamentary Kashmir Committee, a number of journalists, asked questions such as "are any secret talks planned with India?" and "are any secret talks planned with Israel"? He said that to both questions his answer was 'no'. He said that he told the journalists that "we do not believe in secret negotiations."

He recalled that some journalists then asked whether any such offer was received. The Foreign Minister said that his answer was that "off and on suggestions come from different sources but Pakistan has scrupulously followed its principled policies". He said that all that was said by him was that "Pakistan will welcome talks with India especially on Jammu and Kashmir but there will be no secret talks."

At the end of his letter, the Foreign Minister said, "I must request you therefore, not to ascribe to me anything which I have not said." The Muslim would, however, like to make it clear that it did not ascribe anything to the Foreign Minister. His purported statement was published in almost all the newspapers quoting a news agency. The Foreign Minister should have reacted to that story which was carried by several newspapers on their front pages.

Here is the text of the foreign minister letter.

My dear Editor,

'I have read with astonishment your Editorial in today's issue seeking a clarification on a statement that I did not make. The factual position is that as I emerged from the meeting of the Parliament Kashmir Committee, a number of journalists asked questions such as, "are any secret talks planned with India?", "are any secret talks planned with Israel?". To both questions my answer was no, we do not believe in secret negotiations. Some journalists then asked whether any such offer was received. My answer was that off and on suggestions come from different sources, but Pakistan has scrupulously followed its principled policies. Pakistan will welcome talks with India especially on Jammu & Kashmir, but there will be no secret talks. This was all that was said by me.

I must request you therefore, not to ascribe to me any thing which I have not said."

Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali Foreign Minister.

Pakistan: Yasir 'Arafat Discusses Kashmir at Embassy in London

BK0606144696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 6 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President of Palestinian Authority Mr. Yasir 'Arafat has called for continuation of efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue on the basis of UN resolutions. He was speaking at a reception hosted in his honor in London by Pakistan High Commissioner to Britain Mr. Wajid Shamsul Hasan. Mr. Yasir 'Arafat said he himself had been involved in coordinating positions with former Prime Minister Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and his Indian counterpart Mrs. Indira Gandhi on the basis of UN resolutions. He recalled his deep bonds and relationship with former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, whom he described as his brother, and said he always considered himself as one of his family members. Earlier, the high commissioner of Pakistan, Mr. Wajid Shamsul Hasan, in his welcome address said the valiant Palestinian people and dauntless spirit of the Kashmiris remain committed to the right of self- determination.

Pakistan: Asif Ali Expresses 'Complete Neutrality' Toward Afghanistan

BK0506145696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has reiterated Pakistan's complete neutrality in the affairs of Afghanistan and hoped that Afghan groups would proceed toward national reconciliation. He was talking to a delegation of Afghan elders, ulema, former officials, and businessmen who called on him in Islamabad today. The foreign minister hoped that the Afghan leaders would be able to evolve a broad-based government representing all major groups. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said Pakistan desires an early end to the fighting in Afghanistan. In this connection, he stressed that Pakistan is ready to play its role for peace in the region. He expressed Pakistan's readiness to continue to provide humanitarian help and facilities for reconstruction in that country.

The Afghan delegation gave the assurance to work together for promoting bilateral relations and for restoring peace in their country.

Pakistan: Prime Minister Views Economy, Rules Out Defense Cuts

BK0706043096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has stressed for investment in human resource development to make Pakistan a prosperous and progressive country. Addressing the annual dinner of All Pakistan Textile Mills Association [APTMA] in Karachi last night, she called for paying more attention to quality control, research and development, adoption of modern marketing techniques, and resort to value added investments to get Pakistan its due share in the international market. Replying to various points raised by the chairman of APTMA, the prime minister referred to certain decisions by the commerce minister sometimes back to infuse new life into this sector in line with the macroeconomic policies and taking care of the commitments made with Pakistan's trading partners.

Regarding the crisis in cotton, she pointed out that for the past three years the government has been pursuing an open policy in relations to the export and import of cotton. She also mentioned various measures being taken for the betterment of the textile industry and withdrawal of regulatory duty on (ring frame).

About sick units, the prime minister said a committee in Pakistan Banking Council was working on how to revive these units. She said if we have to compete in the textile sector, we will have to compete in value added sector in which she assured the government will provide the entrepreneurs assistance not only 50 percent, but up to 100 percent. She also advocated the revision of taxes on polyester fiber. About duty drawback, the prime minister assured that in future no difficulty would be faced in this respect.

Radio Pakistan's Karachi representative says the prime minister explained various facts and figures of Pakistan's economy, including the income and expenditure in various fields. The prime minister said the government is going to raise 40 billion rupees through taxes in the coming budget to narrow the budgetary deficit to four percent. The prime minister said the government would not reduce further the import duty of 65 percent in the next budget. However, she said the government would continue its tariff reforms. She said the previous government reduced the tariff from 250 to 100 percent and it has now been brought down to 65 percent.

The prime minister said in view of the regional situation and recent announcement of the Indian defense minister that his country will increase its defense budget, Pakistan cannot afford to cut down its minimum defense requirements.

About nuclear issue, she categorically said Pakistan would not act unilaterally on the issue and stressed that we have to find its regional or multilateral solution. She said we cannot compromise on our nuclear program, which is peaceful. However, in case of any threat, we have to be in a position to defend ourselves.

APTMA Chairman Anwar Ahmad Tata in his welcome address pointed out the problems of textile industry and called for urgent steps for its revival. He lauded the steps of the government for resorting law and order in Karachi and strengthening the national economy.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Minister Urges Continuation of State of Emergency

BK0706031696 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 7 Jun 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet; quotation marks as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gen. Anuruddha Ratwatte, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Energy and Deputy Minister of Defence said: "I move that the Proclamation made by the President under Section 2 of the Public Security Ordinance (Chapter 40) bringing into operation the provisions of part II of the aforesaid Ordinance within all the Administrative Districts of Sri Lanka with effect from 04th June, 1996, be approved.

He said members of the House are aware that with the successful conclusion of the three Operations codenamed Riviresa I, II and III conducted by the Government Security Forces, it had been possible to liberate the whole of the Jaffna Peninsula including the Kilali Lagoon, Point Pedro Harbour and the Velvetithurai area which were in the hands of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE].

Most of the civilians who left the Peninsula at the instigation of the LTTE during Operation Riviresa I, have now returned to their normal homesteads willingly and are beginning to start their normal lives with the assistance of the Government Security Forces and the Civil Administration headed by the Government Agent. All the basic needs required for their sustenance are being provided by the Government. Their damaged houses are being repaired with Government assistance for which purpose the necessary materials are being provided to them. The necessary security measures against further attacks by the LTTE are being provided to them by the Security Forces.

Further residents who left the Jaffna Peninsula during Operation Riviresa I, to Vavuniya and other districts including Colombo are being taken back to Jaffna in large numbers on their own requests.

The Tamil people have now come to realise that the armed forces are not their foes but their liberators who had saved them from the barbaric clutches of the LTTE. This fact is amply borne out by the very valuable information they provide to the security forces about the LTTE atrocities.

Such information has helped the security forces immensely in flushing out the LTTE elements who had infiltrated into the liberated areas in the guise of refugees.

The Government has in the meantime launched a massive rehabilitation program in the Jaffna Peninsula and it is hoped to bring the peninsula back to its pristine glory when this rehabilitation program is concluded so that the Tamil people could live happily within their homely surroundings.

The Civil administration within the peninsula is almost back to normal with the functioning of almost all the Assistant Government Agents Offices. Majority of the Government Servants and Government School Teachers have reported back for duty. Police Stations at Kankesanthurai, Palaly, Athchchuveli, Elavaly, Kopai and Kayts have already been reopened. Police Stations at Point-Pedro, Chavakachcheri and Chunnakam are in the process of being opened. It is expected to reopen Police Stations at Koddikamam, Vadukkodai, Velvettithurai shortly. One hundred and two (102) government schools are functioning within the Jaffna District and the Jaffna University is expected to be reopened on 15th of June 1996.

The LTTE has however not given up its barbaric acts and yet continues to destabilise the peaceful coexistence amongst the various ethnic groups in the country. The statement I am tabling in Parliament today will amply bear testimony to this fact.

The Government will however pursue its firm determination to eradicate terrorism in the country so that all the people belonging to all communities could live in peace and harmony which would ultimately usher in peace and prosperity in the whole country.

In this context the State of Emergency which had been proclaimed throughout the country has to be continued for a further period in the interests of public security and the preservation of public order and also to enable the law enforcement authorities to maintain law and order in the country since the provisions of the normal law in force are not adequate.

I, therefore sincerely hope that all the Honourable Members of this House would extend their unstinted support to the Government's efforts to end this protracted ethnic conflict and also to continue this state of Emergency in all the Administrative Districts of the country for a further period".

Sri Lanka: Official Sees 'Serious Rifts' Among LTTE Leaders

BK0706033096 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 7 Jun 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Intelligence reports indicate that serious rifts are developing in the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] hierarchy following successive military defeats, Military Spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe said on Thursday [6 June].

He told the weekly media briefing that Balraj, Soosai and Swarnam are at odds with Swarnalingam alias Swarnam, known as a close associate of Prabhakaran.

In another development, two senior LTTEers who openly refused to carry out orders from their superiors have been 'arrested' by the LTTE. The twosome, LTTE Mannar leader Denzil and Mannar Island leader Sugi, have been punished in this manner for refusing to go to Mullaitivu.

Brigadier Munasinghe quoted intelligence sources as saying that Tamil civilians in Kilinochchi have defied LTTE orders to move into the jungle. The people have forced the LTTE to close down their kilinochchi 'exit pass' office.

The LTTE which is feeling the punch of losing their Jaffna base and funding sources has also begun to collect funds in Kilinochchi through unconventional tactics such as exhibiting films, holding tuition classes and selling electricity produced by generators, he added.

Asked whether the army has 'cleared' the entire Jaffna peninsula, he said it would be virtually impossible to clear every mine and booby trap in the peninsula. "As for LTTE cadres, people give us information on LTTE suspects — civilians cooperate with us 100%. We detain them and hand them over to the police for further action".

Q: How many civilians are living in the Jaffna area under government control?

A: About 500,000.

Q: How many LTTEers have been arrested?

A: That can vary as suspects are taken in and sometimes released later. Of course, they do not carry labels and as long as any LTTE suspects do not cause trouble, carry arms or wear military style uniforms, we don't mind.

The brigadier said the burning of buses in Kalmunai, Eastern Province, is indicative of the LTTE's desperation and inability to attack military targets.

Sri Lanka: Jaffna Residents Express 'Thankfulness' for Liberation

BK0606062296 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 6 Jun 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] People in Jaffna peninsula have organised a series of public meetings to express their gratitude to the People's Alliance government and the armed forces for liberating them from the 10-year repressive rule of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], reports from the North said on Wednesday [5 June].

"Under the LTTE's despotic rule, the ordinary people were denied their basic human rights and freedom and the death penalty awaited anyone who dared to disagree with the LTTE leadership or express a view critical of LTTE leader Prabhakaran. Now that they are rid of that tyranny, they want to demonstrate their thankfulness publicly," visitors from Jaffna told our special correspondent in Vavuniya.

People in the peninsula had been undergoing untold suffering owing to scarcities of food items and other essentials. "The LTTE had the first call on all essentials made available by the government and the NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] and the ordinary people had to make do with what was left over," the visitor had explained.

Over 80 percent of the displaced population are back in their homes and are going about their daily routine in contentment. They do not want to go through a repeat of their grim 10-year experience and pray that the normalcy and peace restored will endure for years to come, according to the visitors.

Meanwhile, official sources said that government offices and banks in the peninsula are functioning smoothly and once ghost towns are fast transforming into hives of trade and commerce. Rehabilitation and reconstruction process is also making headway further easing the lot of the people.

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga on Tuesday evening met members of parliament of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) representing the Jaffna district whom she invited to visit the recaptured peninsula, our sister paper 'The Observer' said on Wednesday.

The delegation led by the EPDP leader Douglas Devananda had talks with the President at 'Temple Trees' [presidential residence], Colombo on the situation in the liberated Jaffna.

The President had informed the members of parliament that 407,000 displaced people had re-settled in their homes in Jaffna and invited the Parliamentarians to assess the situation for themselves.

Our sister paper quoted Devananda as saying that the members of parliament were keen on taking a hand in strengthening the normal life in the peninsula.

The EPDP armed cadres would not be deployed in the Jaffna mainland. But they will continue to assist security forces in maintaining control of the small islands like Kayts, Devananda had said.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Battle Report Claims 'Increasing' Enlistments

BK0606151596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 31 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] attacked a military camp in Thattatheru junction, located one km from the center of Jaffna, the day before yesterday. There is no report of losses suffered by the military. The LTTE did not suffer any casualties.

Captain Chellaian alias Thambirasa Deivendran from Vadamarachchi attained martyrdom in a sudden confrontation with the troops at Arasaradi-Nelliyadi locality in Vadamarachchi at 1130 on 27 May. We pay tribute to this national hero whose goal was the liberation of our motherland and who sacrificed his life for it.

A small camp in Manal Aru locality was also attacked by the LTTE the day before yesterday. The camp, which lies between the main camps of Mankindimalai and Munthirikaikulam, came under attack at 1930. The LTTE took positions about 150 meters from the camp and attacked it ferociously with mortar shells and hand grenades. The military is understood to have suffered heavy losses.

A large number of young men and women are enlisting themselves in the LTTE. The number enlisting in the organization in Wanni area has been increasing in the past few weeks. A large number of people are also joining the organization in the East. It is learned that workshops at three places in the East have been opened for new recruits.

Meanwhile, troop movements have been crippled in most places in the East. The military is mostly avoiding patrols in the suburbs. [passage omitted]

The Sri Lankan Government has also claimed that two patients in Colombo hospital have died due to the strike by the electricity board employees. The government said their irresponsible action has greatly affected the people. Hospital sources have rejected the charges saying that the deaths have nothing to do with the electricity board strike and that electricity is being provided for emergency cases.

The Tigers's aspirations: motherland of Tamil Eelam! Thanks.

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